



**Dr Keith Suter**  
**WORKSHOP:**  
**Effective Influencing – The Power to Change**

Key Text: Kerry Patterson et al "Influencer: The Power to Change Anything", New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007

- book is very stimulating but not well edited and difficult to follow!
- no guarantee that I have been able to make full sense of the book!

**1. Importance of this Approach**

- New York City's reduced crime rate: the broken window pane theory of crime prevention
- make the invisible visible
- place the price of hospital equipment where it can be seen by practitioners

**2. The Importance of Finding the Vital Behaviours**

- search for behaviour – not numbers, outcomes or strategies etc; the strategy should be to change a handful of vital behaviours
- identify just a few vital behaviours
  - Muhammad Yunus: people are poor not because of their laziness but because of their lack of access to capital
  - reducing juvenile crime by (a) requiring delinquents to take responsibility for someone else's success and (b) demanding that everyone confront everyone else about everything
  - smile, make eye contact, identify yourself, let people know what you're doing and why, and end every interaction by asking "Is there anything else that you need?"
- search for recovery behaviours: people make mistakes but some seem to be able to find their own way back – the importance of corrective action
- test your results: don't be satisfied with just observing behaviours – check on the outcomes

**3. Vital Questions:**

- - will it be worth it? [am I motivated?]
- - can I do what's required? [am I able?]

**4. Six Sources of Influence**

[want to?]	[able to?]
personal Motivation	personal ability
social motivation	social ability
structural motivation	structural ability

## 5. Guinea Worm Case Study

[sorry for the gross description of the worm!]

3 vital behaviours:

- - people must filter their water
- - should someone still become infected, he or she must not make contact with the public water supply until the infection has run its course – stay away from the communal water
- - if a neighbour is not filtering the water or has become infected, the villagers must confront the person

Source 1: Personal Motivation: a guinea worm is very painful and a good way to get relief is to bathe – hence infecting the water. The victim has to keep away from the water

Source 2: Personal Ability: many villages don't know how to filter water properly

Source 3: Social Motivation: as an outsider, the Westerner has to keep the village powerbrokers onside

Source 4: Social Ability: villages have to assist each other ["it takes a village..."]

Source 5: Structural Motivation: infected individuals need to work to make money but their circulation jeopardizes the water supply – they need to be compensated for not getting near the supply

Source 6: Structural Ability: villagers don't have the necessary tools for filtering the water or caring for wounds

## 6. Other Interesting Comments

- i. passing laws or making training available won't be enough
- ii. become a master story teller [people still need a grand sense of narrative in their lives – despite all this Post Modern business!] eg US workers who spied on Japanese factory workers and found out they really did work harder – and went back to their colleagues to tell of what they had seen; stories need to be understandable, credible and motivating; should be a clear link between the current behaviours and existing (or possibly future) negative results
- iii. just get people to try something – they are not necessarily committing to it long-term; they are simply giving it a go (who knows? they may like it)
- iv. the more you try to control others, the less control you gain
- v. the difference between sacrifice and punishment is not the amount of pain but the amount of choice: seek the power of the committed heart
- vi. much of will is skill: children who are able to demonstrate self—control at a young age enjoy greater success because that same trait helps them achieve good results later in life eg they are disciplined enough to keep persisting; the power of deliberate practice
- vii. harness peer pressure: 1961 Stanley Milgram's controversial experiments on people taking orders from men in white coats – but what was less reported is that it only took one person to be seen to refuse to "electrify" the "victim" for the other people to refuse to do so (encourage openness in the workplace/ boardroom discussion)
- viii. the power of the right one: not all people are equal: get the right people onside
- ix. the merit of an idea is not in itself necessarily enough for it to be embraced eg it took almost two centuries for British naval authorities to make limes available for their sailors; the "message is no more important than the messenger"
- x. "silence fails": medical malpractice occurs because people are unwilling to speak out [but whistle-blowing can be a career-limiting move!]
- xi. incentives: the villager who finds a neighbour hiding a guinea worm gets an attractive T-shirt (reward vital behaviours and not just results)

- xii. hospitals are not a good place to be when you are sick because of diseases: Dr Leon Bender noticed that all returning passengers on a luxury ship got their hands squirted with Purell to kill off any diseases; he now has it at his hospital for every time a medical practitioner touches a patient (Australian study: only 9 per cent of doctors meet industry standards) and so every practitioner "caught" using a disinfectant gets a US\$10 Starbucks coupon; making the invisible visible: "I would love to culture your hand" to show how many germs each practitioner carried around on them
- xiii. be careful of your incentives! Fragging hardly existed in World War II and yet was widespread in Vietnam [as I noticed!]; common reward structures: soldiers wanted to go home as quickly as possible. In WWII they were there "for the duration" and so expected their officers to win the war quickly and they were willing to help in that task. But in Vietnam they were there for a one year tour of duty: they just wanted to spend that year avoiding death and so punished (via fragging) their officers for risking their lives
- xiv. ask: "what does it take to get fired around here?" if "embarrass the boss" is the first response then the organization is unhealthy
- xv. small things matter: "Whyte's spindle" (William Foot Whyte, University of Chicago): returning GIs after WWII worked in kitchens and were yelled at by waitresses for the delay in cooking meals; he suggested placing all orders on a skewer for cooks to remove in order and handle - thereby eliminating the exchange of words at the door

## 7. Concluding Remarks

- i. "human nature doesn't change": maybe: but some behaviours have been changed eg duelling and spitting
- ii. people do not think their way through to a new way living – they live their way through to a new way of thinking
- iii. listen to Keith Suter interview one of the authors of the book (Ron McMillan) at <http://www.companydirectors.com.au/Bookshop/Podcasts>

**Keith Suter**  
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