

# ...with Jon Driver

Professor of Psychology at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience

## One inspiration

The late Irvin Rock, a charismatic American perceptual psychologist, was a sabbatical visitor to my then psychology department when I was a young and naive research assistant back in the 1980s. Although nearing retirement he still retained the enthusiasm, curiosity and excitement of an absolute beginner. He illustrated vividly to me and others that a scientific career is a voyage of discovery that can be as interesting and fulfilling as you choose to make it; and that the choices continue.

## One moment that changed the course of your career

When I was a teenage schoolboy in Hull my mother worked as a school librarian. One day she brought home some psychology textbooks, including Richard Gregory's *Eye and Brain*, plus Luria's *Introduction to Neuropsychology*. Those two books really captured my imagination. By a quirk of

fate, reading them coincided with some first personal encounters with neurological patients, as a volunteer on an occupational therapy ward, and via my Gran who suffered from Parkinson's disease. These early experiences set me on the path I have followed ever since. I still remain fascinated by how brain mechanisms support mental processes in health and disease.

## One book that you think all psychologists should read

Milner and Goodale's *The Visual Brain in Action* shows that much can still be learnt from single cases in neuropsychology when viewed with a fresh eye. It also illustrates how progress can be greatly accelerated when human neuropsychology is placed within the much wider context of cognitive neuroscience, neuroanatomy, and related animal work. Although one can quibble with details of their particular theory, I think that the more

general point about combining different strands of evidence will serve neuropsychology well for many decades.

## One thing that you would change about psychology

Sometimes the minor disagreements within the field can get more attention than the major areas of consensus and proven fact. Hopefully it's the latter that endure.

## One challenge psychology faces

Inspiring schoolchildren and many other non-expert audiences, yet without becoming diluted, trivialised or sensationalised.

## One regret

Giving up mathematics too soon.

## One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

Enjoy psychology, which is a sufficiently well-shaped field to have lots of enduring important issues, yet is also sufficiently amorphous and

new that you really can make your own distinctive contribution.

## One cultural recommendation

Turn up the bass when listening to Stax records, then go and see Booker T and the MGs while they're still playing.

## One alternative career path you might have chosen

Bass player and studio tech, if I had been more talented musically, more technically minded, or just more stubborn.



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## resource

See [www.icn.ucl.ac.uk](http://www.icn.ucl.ac.uk) and the related website [www.ucl.ac.uk/neuroscience](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/neuroscience). These websites provides lots of information on ongoing work at UCL and more generally.

## coming soon

Articles on the seven deadly sins, career concepts, educational neuroscience, and much more...

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