

... with Aleks Krotoski

'we have to take risks, fall over sometimes

One person who inspired you

My first social psychology teacher, Steve Mayer, at Oberlin College, Ohio.

One moment that changed the course of your career

Walking down the street to do a 'piece to camera' for a Channel 4 programme doing my nails, and thinking, 'Is this what I got a psychology degree for?' Decided then and there to quit television and go back to university to study for a PhD.

One book that you think all psychologists should read

The Superstition of the Pigeon by B.F. Skinner: a classic told delightfully.

One great psychological resource on the internet

I'm a big fan of the BPS's Research Digest; Christian Jarrett's coverage of the latest psych studies is excellent. I also follow quite a few psychologists on Twitter and



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am a fan of getting their works in progress as and when they tweet.

One thing that you would change about psychology/psychologists

I think we have to be better about communicating with the public, as with all science. Rather than wait for an issue to blow up in the headlines, we need to pre-empt public understanding and get those dialogues going so people can appreciate and understand the nuances of scientific knowledge.

One challenge you think psychology faces

The most irksome issue I face is the perception that psychology (in general, and social psychology specifically) isn't a science, but an 'art'. I get this all the time from the hard science community, and from the science communication community too.

One regret

I really wish I'd stop dithering about whether I should pursue a career in academia or in journalism!

One surprising thing about your BBC Radio 4 series *The*

Digital Human

It's more a delight – that people who don't think they want to listen to a radio programme about technology get sucked in to the stories. It's about human behaviour, not about the tech, and I'm so pleased that this has shone through.

One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

Be rigorous and thorough. And don't be afraid to share.

One alternative career path you may have chosen

I could have been a clinical psychologist and an



environmental psychologist. I'm pretty myopic! In my fantasies, I'd have been an Olympic beach volleyball player, but I was too old to really push it when I rediscovered my sport.

One film

This is always a difficult one as my points of reference change every day. *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* is a film about the mind that makes me smile and cry. It's a wonderful story, and shows why we have to take risks and fall over sometimes.

One hero/heroine from psychology past or present

I don't really go for heroics; rather, I'm enamoured with ideas!

One thing that organised psychology could do better

Support some really far-out

work – collaborations between psychologists and artists, mathematicians, developers, designers, chefs, magicians. Break the perception that written work is the dominant output for psychological inquiry.

One great thing that psychology has achieved

Ethics committees. Thank goodness for ethics committees.

One problem that psychology should deal with

There are as many questions as people in the world. It's impossible to pin down.

One proud moment

Encouraging my stepmum to use interpretative phenomenological analysis in her MA in hand therapy – a discipline which she was responsible for establishing – and then watching her become a fierce proponent of it in her clinical research.

One resource of your own

Untangling the Web: What the Internet Is Doing to You – it's actually more a psychology book than a book about the web. Like *Digital Human*, it focuses on the human, and what we're able to learn about our attitudes and behaviour by observing our lives through the lens of technology. Also, it was the place where I published the results of the academic work I did in the 2000s, so felt great to bookend that part of my career for the general public.

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