

...with Jennie Lindon

Chartered Psychologist and writer

One inspiration

My parents, who were sound in child psychology without being psychologists, and very committed to education in the broadest sense.

One choice I don't regret

Going independent at the end of the 1970s and continuing to operate a consultancy and training business since that time. It has been a family enterprise in more ways than one – with Lance Lindon, my partner and fellow Chartered Psychologist. It was a challenge in the first years to keep up to date. But some key subscriptions and the advance of technology has made my professional life much easier.

One book that made a difference to me

Margaret Donaldson's *Children's Minds*, which I read in the late 1970s. I was bowled over by the creative approach of her team within the experimental tradition. The book is so respectful of the child's perspective. It

fuelled my passion for watching what children actually do and listening to what they want to say.

One moment that changed the course of your career

A last-minute decision to apply for Social Psychology at Sussex, when my other applications were all for Sociology. Their school of study approach (late 1960s) gave me an openness to learning from other disciplines that has stood the test of time. Most of my professional colleagues, in a loose network, have not been psychologists.

One way to safeguard children

I will stand up for robust safeguarding practice. However, we need to deal with the paranoia over touch which has derailed emotionally safe practice in some (not all) early years and school provision. Young children need to experience a nurturing environment, good-quality care of their physical needs

and affectionate communication, as much for when they want a hug of happiness as when they need comfort for distress.

One theory that made me think

My first consultancy work was with local authority day nurseries and a fellow consultant brought me back to Alfred Adler (a faint memory from my undergraduate days) plus the development of his ideas by Rudolf Dreikurs. It was like a bright light: the distinction between encouragement and rewards, the difference between using consequences and punishment, and the concept of mistaken goals.

One thing I would change about psychology

Some psychologists are mired in an academic tradition that welcomes never using one sentence when three can be drafted – ideally joined together in subordinate clauses. Furthermore, English is a rich and complex language; there has to be a very good reason to make up new words.

One way to support equality in early childhood

Focus on the learning journey for children – what they are likely to understand and how their knowledge builds outwards from their personal

and family world. Adults are responsible for addressing persistent inequalities in society but need the current younger generation on their side. Every individual child needs to feel positive about their own sense of personal identity, and find a pride in their own heritage that does not rest on disdain for any other group.

One professional challenge that psychology faces

To engage with other professional worlds, yet with an understanding that the priorities and values can be very different. I believe we have an important role to play in media, and I enjoy my consultancy work with children's television. But it is



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resource

Lindon, J. (2009). *Guiding the behaviour of children and young people: Linking theory and practice 0–18 years*. London: Hodder Education. 'This book was an opportunity to revisit continuities of good sense and place them in the vital context of relationships.'

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