

...with Jane Ogden

Professor in Health Psychology at the University of Surrey

One inspiration

A woman academic out there, who I haven't met yet, who has the right work-life balance (sees their kids, works hard, has fun), doesn't take themselves too seriously but still produces good stuff.

One moment that changed the course of your career

Sitting through seriously tedious labs and sticking electrodes into the heads of sea slugs to understand human behaviour – made me realise I am not a biological reductionist and shouldn't have done a degree in neurobiology.

One book that you think all psychologists should read

Daughters of Egalia by Gert Brantenberg. It challenges notions of gender and biological reductionism. I gave it to my students to read and they were suitably politicised!

One challenge you think psychology faces

Cats falling off walls get

2,000,000 hits overnight. We get 50 if we are lucky. We need to move into the modern age of dissemination.

One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

Have a breadth of knowledge. Know lots of theories in lots of areas and read lots of



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different types of studies. Then use this to do something novel and creative. Don't just reinvent the wheel.

One cultural recommendation

Before I Go to Sleep by S.J. Watson. A real page-turner, very exciting and really challenges notions of 'who am I?'

One thing that makes me laugh

Hugh Grant in the 'Pop goes my heart' video for *Music and Lyrics*. Very funny film. Particularly if you are a child of the 80s.

One of my greatest achievements

To have produced two fantastic kids who are curious and funny and kind. And the fifth edition of my textbook – which has just come out, nearly killed me to write, but it looks lovely.

One treasured possession

My Gran's eternity ring, which speaks to me and tells me whether or not I am doing the right thing.

One great thing that health

psychology has achieved

It has encouraged doctors, nurses, dieticians and nutritionists to think more psychologically about their patients.

One problem that psychology should deal with

Emotion. Generally our theories are far too rational and logical. We need to work out how to understand the nuances of emotion more.

One hope for the future of psychology

In my area much of the most creative and novel work was done in the early 1980s. Since then most of us have been adding to this work. It would be great if people could start to think outside of the paradigm and develop a brand new perspective for us to get our teeth into. I have been trying for the past 20 years but haven't managed it yet.

One alternative career path you may have chosen

A journalist or broadcaster. I'm better at seeing the bigger picture than the detail.

One psychological superpower you'd like

To stop people smoking (particularly in the doorways of wherever I am).

One final thought

I constantly wonder about the point of being an academic and whether it makes any difference to anyone. But then I stop and remember; my students are fantastic, my colleagues are often friends, and I love thinking and writing. What else could I do?

More answers online at www.thepsychologist.org.uk

resource

'I have written five books and am more proud of these than any of my academic papers. Partly because my family and friends can relate to them and are suitably impressed, but also because I enjoy being able to find stories and patterns from all the work out there.'

coming soon

A special issue on the senses. Remember, if you have ideas for topics or people you would like to see featured in *The Psychologist*, get in touch.

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