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Medical & Biological Perspectives of Hubristic Behaviour

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Power corrupts

- ❑ Out of control egos
- ❑ High risk and reckless behaviour
- ❑ Arrogance and contempt for others
- ❑ Disastrous consequences

Hubris Syndrome

- ❑ Not a medical or psychiatric term
- ❑ Personality change a trait rather than a disorder
- ❑ Affects individuals in power and influence for long time
- ❑ Likely to abate once the context of power has changed

HUBRIS SYNDROME: Criteria

The behaviour is seen in a person who:

1. Sees the world as a place for self-glorification through the use of power
2. Has a tendency to take action primarily to enhance personal image
3. Shows disproportionate concern for image and presentation
4. Exhibits messianic zeal and exaltation in speech
5. Conflates self with nation or organisation
6. Uses the royal 'we' in conversations
7. Shows excessive self-confidence
8. Manifestly has contempt for others
9. Shows accountability only to a higher court (history or God)
10. Displays the unshakable belief that he will be vindicated in that court
11. Loses contact with reality
12. Resorts to restlessness and impulsive actions
13. Allows moral rectitude to obviate consideration of practicality, cost or outcome
14. Displays incompetence with disregard for the nuts and bolts of policy-making.

Among the 14 behaviours, 5 are called 'unique' (5, 6, 10, 12 and 13) in the sense that they do not appear among the criteria of personality disorders in DSM-IV.

Owen & Davidson state that at least 3 of the 14 defining behaviours should be present, of which at least 1 should be among the 5 unique components, to satisfy the diagnostic criteria of the hubris syndrome.

All Walks of Life

- ❑ Politicians: Lloyd George, Chamberlain, Thatcher and Blair, George W. Bush
- ❑ Bankers - CEOs:
Collective hubris at the massive global financial crisis of 2008
Not predicted
RBS, Exxon, BP, Nissan stunning examples
- ❑ Military are prone to acquiring hubris syndrome when power increasing moving up the ranks
- ❑ Judiciary, Medicine, Intellectuals, Aviation

Hubris an occupational hazard

- ❑ Social or cultural phenomena
- ❑ Learned behaviours
- ❑ Personality factors
- ❑ Neurobiological roots neuroendocrinological and neuropsychological features might underpinning hubris
- ❑ Genetics - Genome

Reasons of Hubris Syndrome

- Are certain personality types predisposed to hubristic behaviour?
- Evidence for a multifactorial basis of aetiology of hubris syndrome

Possible Hypotheses

□ Social Brain Centres

□ "Winner Effect" (Power relationships influence cognitive and emotional function via systematic changes in the brain's approach and avoidance systems, linked to the neurotransmitters dopamine and noradrenaline)

□ **Neuroscientific explanations** (*acutely elevated steroids may optimize performance on a range of tasks but chronically elevated steroids may promote irrational risk-reward choices*)

The 'Winner Effect' (Robertson, 2012)

- ❑ A term used in biology to describe how an animal that has won a few fights against weak opponents is much more likely to win later bouts against stronger contenders
- ❑ Success may alter the balance of neurotransmitters in the brain chemistry, leading to a change in temperament, greater focus, higher confidence and more aggression
- ❑ Levels of testosterone rise in the winning athlete and fall in the loser. This raised testosterone can increase confidence and risk taking and improve chances of winning yet again
- ❑ Most winners eventually come up against a stronger opponent and become losers

The Role of Hormones (Coates, 2016)

- ❑ Acutely elevated steroids may optimize performance on a range of tasks but chronically elevated steroids may promote irrational risk-reward choices
- ❑ This hypothesis suggests that the irrational exuberance and pessimism observed during market bubbles and crashes may be mediated by steroid hormones

Stress model (Robbins 2018)

- ❑ Hubris syndrome is an inevitable consequence of chronic risky decision-making under stress
- ❑ Chronic stress depletes serotonin in the brain - frontal lobe
- ❑ Serotonin depletion can lead to 'reversal learning' (i.e. the ability to reverse on winning strategies when the strategy starts delivering losses)
- ❑ With this model decision-making is an effort of stressful activity and that holding power involves intense decision making
- ❑ Hubris Syndrome could be a consequence of deficient decision-making under chronic stress

Gender & Age

- ❑ Hubristic behaviour might be related gender and age differences
- ❑ Testosterone surges tend to be higher in males than females and testosterone declines with age
- ❑ Young males might be prone hubristic over-confidence producing financial 'bubbles'
- ❑ In classical Greece it was both young males and the rich who were most likely to be guilty of hubris

Environmental factors (Adrian Furham, 2017)

- The process of the interaction between personality and environment is thought to be in determining success, hubris or failure

Contemporary Risks

- ❑ The speed of communications in our times, combined with the widespread application of social media and easy access to large groups of people, might predispose to both collective and individual hubristic decision making
- ❑ The consequences of hubristic behaviour can be profound with dangerous consequences

Some Research Questions

- How to distinguish hubristic leadership differs from visionary leadership?
- Where is hubris most prevalent and dangerous?
- Does hubris have experiential, biological or personality antecedents?
- Is hubris associated with particular forms of social organisation?
- What are the factors that inhibit its occurrence?
- Where is it absent? Why?

Daedalus Trust

- ❑ Raising awareness of personality and behaviour changes
- ❑ Share current knowledge
- ❑ Explore opportunities for interdisciplinary research
- ❑ Recognise the negative as well as possible positive consequences
- ❑ Explore ways organisations develop and maintain positive behavioural risk management practices

The Intoxication of Power: From neurosciences to Hubris in Healthcare and Public Life, 2012

Leadership: Stress and Hubris, 2014

Power, Gender and Hubris, 2017

Daedalus Trust: Research Funding

- Hubristic Leadership and Reconciliation in the Workplace
Constantine Sedikides et al, School of Psychology, University of Southampton
- Confidence, over-confidence and hubris in the banking sector
Dennis Tourish, Royal Holloway, University of London
- Developing a Process Model of Corporate Hubris
Jane Hendy, Faculty of Business, Economics and Law, University of Surrey
Danielle Tucker, Essex Business School, University of Essex
- Power and Hubris Behaviour: Neural Basis and Attenuating Factors
Ana Guinote et al, University College London
- Hubristic leadership: A processual perspective
Tim Wray, Surrey Business School, University of Surrey
- Use of Linguistic Markers in the Identification and Analysis of Chief Executives' Hubris
Vita Akstinaite, Surrey Business School, University of Surrey

Daedalus Trust: Publications

St M. Leunissen, Constantine Sedikides, TIM Wildschute:

Why Narcissists are Unwilling to Apologize: The Role of Empathy and Guilt.

Journal of Personality, Eur. J. Pers. 31: 385-403 (2017):

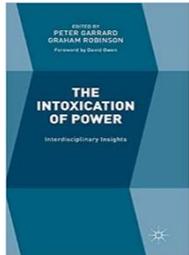
Tourish, Dennis (2019):

Towards an organizational theory of hubris: symptoms, behaviours and social fields within finance and banking.

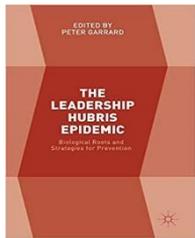
Organization. ISSN 1350-5084

Daedalus Trust: Books

The Intoxication of Power Interdisciplinary Insights
Robinson, Graham, & Garrard, Peter (Eds.). Palgrave
Macmillan 2016

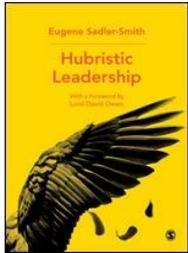


The Leadership Hubris Epidemic: Biological Roots and
Strategies for Prevention
Garrard, Peter (Ed.) Palgrave Macmillan 2018

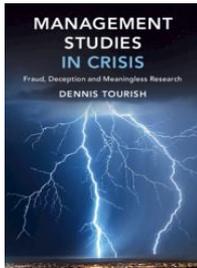


Books

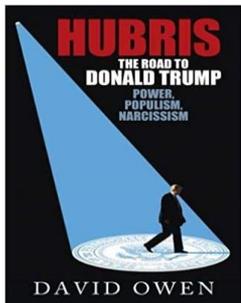
Hubristic Leadership. Eugene Sadler-Smith Sage



Management Studies in Crisis: Fraud, Deception and Meaningless Research Dennis Tourish 2019 CUP



Hubris - The Road to Donald Trump. David Owen 2018
Menuhin



Thank you

(www.daedalustrust.org.uk/)