

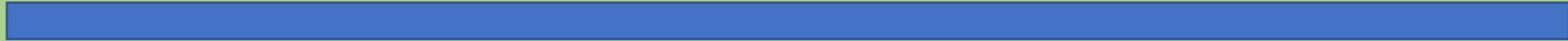
Tensions during organization change

- How power underpins competition and collaboration

December 3rd 2019

The Iron Filings Experiment of Your Childhood

R O C M L P N
O L E I
B A T



P O W E R

But we are caught up in a world of make believe and
let's pretend

T
C N
O M L P I
R O L E T
B A

**We're all equal... there's no hierarchy... we'll
all do 'what's right'**

And the Health Sector is kept stuck by unhelpful myths about change

- All is fixable
- Perfection is the only state worth pursuing
- There is a right way of doing things
- Metrics reflect an 'objective' truth
- Values bind the organization
- We're all in it together... we share a common purpose

How can we have robust conversations about collaboration (and its limits) rather than put much of our energy into having pretend ones?

(Where persistent habits of competition, status and power are disappeared)

1. Provenance

2. Personal Feelings About Power

3. The TRUTH Framework (Mnemonic)

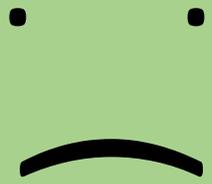
4. Hot Data

5. Last words

A research study begun in 2014 into 'Speaking truth to **power**' – John Higgins & Professor Megan Reitz

- July 2019: FT Pearson/FT Publishing 'Speak up: Say what needs to be said and hear what needs to be heard'
- Harvard Business Review 2017-19 (With Ben Fuchs)
 - Do you have advantage blindness?
 - The problem with saying my door is always open
 - 5 questions to ask before you call out someone more powerful
 - You're scarier than you think
- Ashridge Research Reports 2017 and 2019
 - Being silenced and silencing others: Developing the capacity to speak truth to power
 - Speaking truth to power: Interim survey results into how people are silenced and silence others at work

It's all about POWER and RELATIONSHIPS



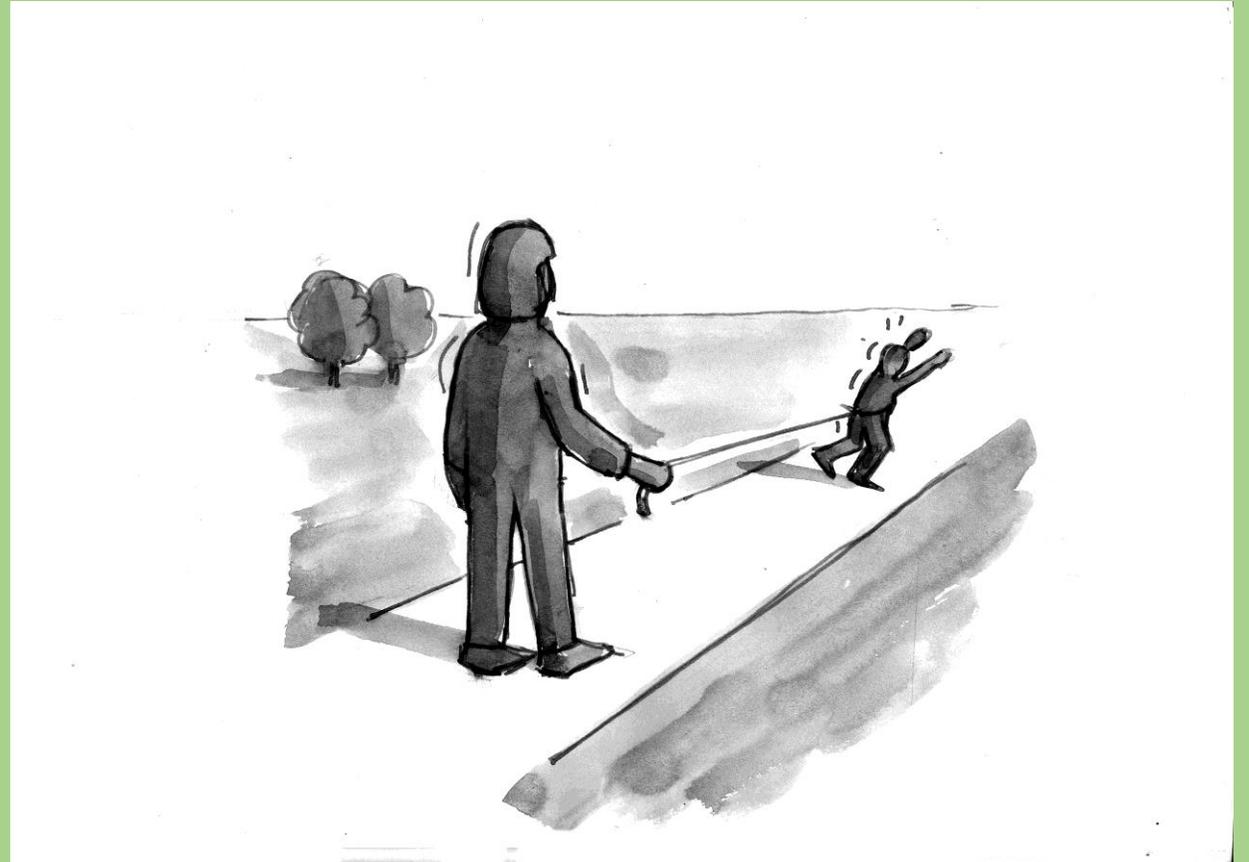
**Personal
Feelings
About
Power**



Who are you in the picture?



What type of power is present? Is it 'good' or 'bad'?



Who or what is playing what role?



Is nurture empowering or patronising?



Pictures courtesy of Julian Burton of Delta 7



What's the context?



What's in the shadow?

When do you feel powerful and able to speak your truth? When do you feel powerless?

How do you make others feel powerful and able to speak their truth? How do you make others feel powerless?

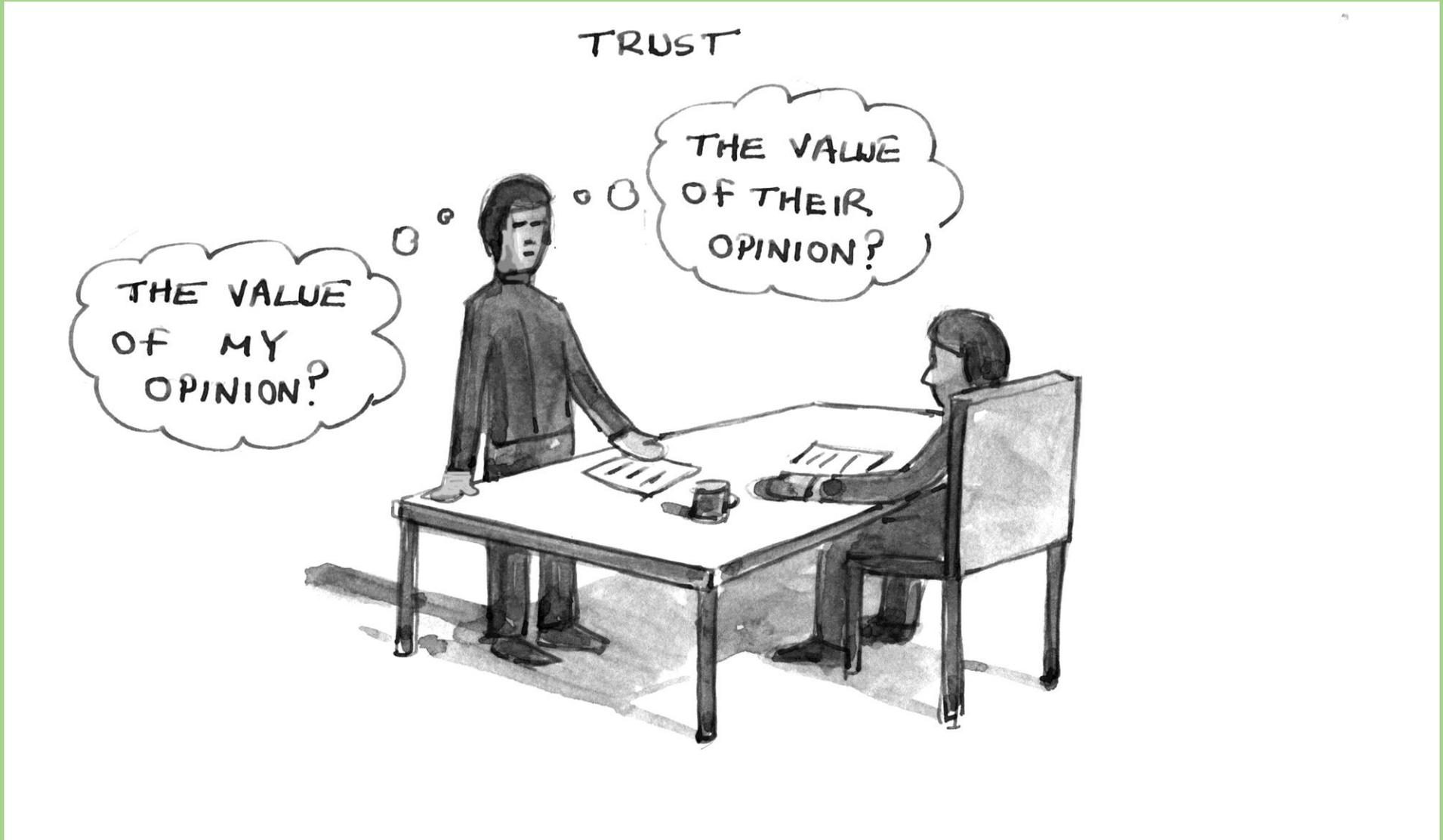
Trust

Risk

Understanding

Titles

How



Pictures courtesy of Julian Burton of Delta 7

RISKS

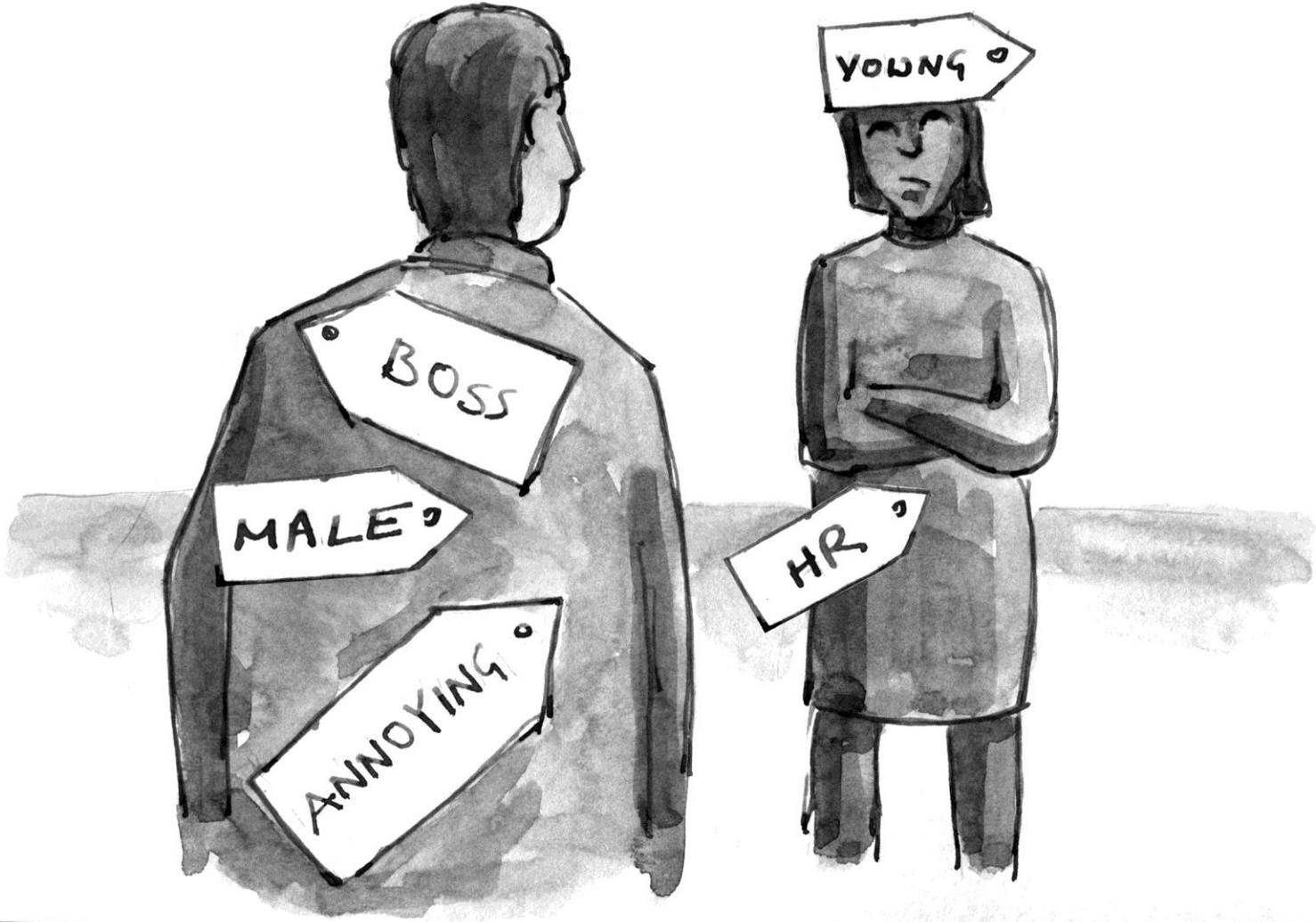


UNDERSTANDING

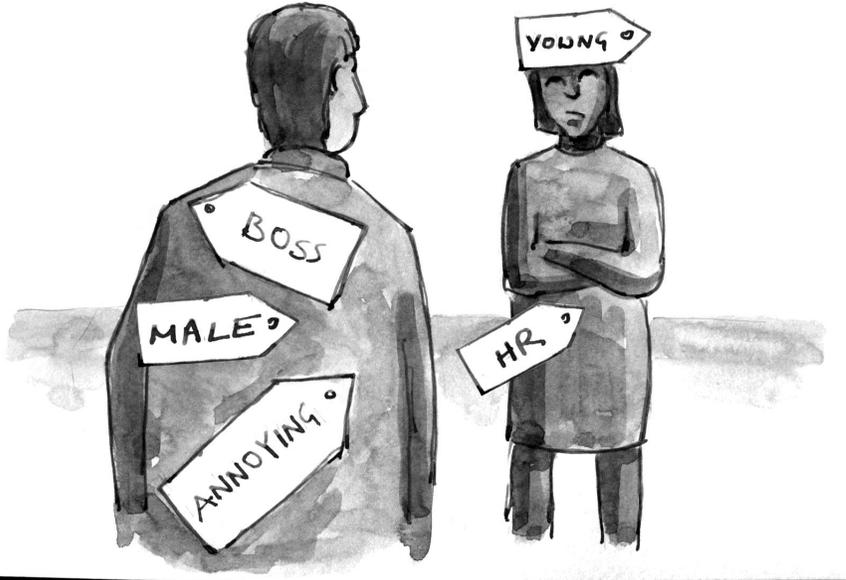


*Pictures courtesy of Julian Burton
of Delta 7*

TITLES



TITLES



What titles/labels get put on you?

What titles/labels do you put on others?

How does this shape what gets said and heard?

HOW TO



What are the limits to a rules based approach to language and relationships?

OR

When is a process not the answer?



- Trust** – in your opinion and the opinion of others
- Risk** – of speaking up or of being spoken up to
- Understanding** – of the politics, games and agendas
- Titles** – that get put on you and you put on others
- How** – to choose the right words, right time, right place

What's your TRUTH?

How well do you speak up?

How well do you listen up?

Where are your strengths and weaknesses?

What are your unearned advantages and disadvantages?

Hot Data – 2019 Findings

- We suffer from ‘superiority’ illusion
- There is a hierarchy to speaking up
- Speaking up is STILL gendered
- The relationship with your ‘boss’ is fundamental
- We are most guarded in formal meetings
- There are dark secrets and wonderful ideas unknown to you
- We believe/pretend social bias doesn’t exist

We suffer from 'superiority' illusion... It's not me, it's you

- We see ourselves as better at speaking and listening up than everyone else
- The more senior people are the better their opinion of their listening skills

.... People therefore see problems in communication as mainly to do with others

There is a hierarchy to speaking up

- The more senior you are, the more you think those junior to you are being open and honest when they do speak up
- You are wrong

... Making decisions with this belief is dangerous... pay attention to how 'psychological safety' influences what gets said in the workplace

Speaking up is STILL gendered

- Challenging those who benefit from the status quo is tricky
- Those who benefit are often blind to their advantage

... It takes a collective responsibility to change things, and this is not easy to do (*'Men and women have only just begun to learn how to talk together'* Theodore Zeldin)

The relationship with your direct boss is fundamental

... As with Gallup's seminal research on engagement, line manager relationships appear to be instrumental in encouraging or suppressing speaking up and listening up more widely in an organization

... Speaking up is... personal and specific to a particular power dynamic and how it plays out in the moment

Generic 'best practice' is unlikely to deliver good outcomes... beware the theatre of 'fake believe' behaviours

We are most guarded in formal meetings

- And women and more junior people are the most guarded of all in these settings
- Yet formal meetings are where we invest so much of our conversational time
- Which may make them the poorest place for making decisions

There are dark secrets and wonderful ideas unknown to you

- Many people know something of value to their organization and don't know what to do with it
- Or have decided to do nothing...
- Or have only raised it informally...

... More junior people may have unique insight but are the least likely to raise it... they are the 'secret keepers'... who could reduce malpractice and increase innovation...

We believe/pretend social bias doesn't exist

- People will admit to being influenced by someone's job title
- And by their age (a bit)
- But hardly ever by ethnicity or gender

... Even those who acknowledge their biases (conscious and unconscious) don't know what to do to offset their impact



TEDx speaker
Megan Reitz
and John Higgins

Speak Up

*'The how-to guide
to navigating the
power and politics
of conversations
at work'*

Des Dearlove and
Stuart Crainer, Thinkers50

Say what needs
to be said and hear
what needs to
be heard

FT PUBLISHING
FINANCIAL TIMES

- Your personal feelings about power shape what you see and hear about competition and collaboration
- The TRUTH is out there
- The hot stories
 - We are human all too human
 - Hierarchy matters

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