



Quarterly Newsletter

THE CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING IN RISK

Happy New Year for 2021 and Theme

As this is the first CLLR Newsletter for 2021, let me take this opportunity to wish you all the best for a fulfilling 2021. Our last newsletter was in October 2020.

The theme for this newsletter is **Gaslighting** and the risks associated with its destructive practice. It is a sad reality that people are so harmed by this activity and practice and that many don't discern its latency for severe harm to Mind and body, relationships and social meaning. Zero harm indeed. I can think of no more harmful ideology than zero, the hotbed for gaslighting.

I get many letters from people who have been destroyed and been made unwell by people who use risk and safety as tools for gaslighting. Gaslighting has become a common form of abuse and harm in the risk and safety industry and while it counts, this harm is never counted.

Gaslighting and Risk



Doubt is one of those attributes that can be good or bad depending on the context. A healthy sense of doubt and scepticism can be good if tempered by skilled critical thinking (<https://safetyrisk.net/critical-thinking-at-risk/>; <https://safetyrisk.net/the-need-for-critical-thinking-in-safety/>) and openness to Transdisciplinarity (<https://safetyrisk.net/transdisciplinarity-and-worldviews-in-risk/>). Unfortunately, neither of these skills are a part of the culture of risk and safety Bodies of Knowledge. It is

therefore quite easy to gaslight people in the risk industry online because the climate lacks critical skills in discernment (<https://www.humandimensions.com/product/real-risk/>).

The idea of gaslighting comes from theatre and film particularly the movie *Gaslight* (1940), an example of how one can manipulate and control another's grip on reality. The gaslighter usually **sets up** (grooms) another person who is unaware that the person they are trusting is a predatory gaslighter.

Usually the gaslighting starts with innocuous comments, building trust, skilled priming, grooming

and framing in self-doubt, created co-dependence, manipulation, power shifting and then a slow process of undermining the other; leading ultimately to abuse. The abuse usually takes the form of psychological distress and convincing the other that they are worthy of abuse. Sometimes it can lead to physical abuse but most times the gaslighter focuses on destroying the psyche. This is the path of the sociopath and narcissist who gains enjoyment and pleasure from power over others (<https://biomedres.us/pdfs/BJSTR.MS.ID.003686.pdf>).

Risk and safety by its nature and especially zero cult ideology, set up a perfect climate for gaslighting.

Gaslighting is very hard to detect early on. People are mostly trusting and don't assume they are being set up or hi-jacked. The slow process of bending someone else's reality or perception of themselves is hard to detect without a skilled sense of critical questioning, ability to be non-compliant and an awareness of how co-dependence is created. This is particularly difficult for people who have been indoctrinated to be compliant, non-question of authority and seeking certainty/security.

In the Social Psychology of Risk (SPoR) we learn early how to recognize 'red flags' and we call these iCues. These are learned early through an understanding of framing, pitching, priming, reframing, anchoring and mirroring. It is important to note that these same skills that are used in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) (<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320368>; https://doc.lagout.org/science/0_Computer%20Science/3_Theory/Neural%20Networks/Neuro%20Linguistic%20Programming%20WorkBook.pdf) can be beneficial but can also be used unethically by the gaslighter.

The trouble for the risk industry is that Ethics/Politics is not a course of study. So the risk and safety industry in particular is a hot bed and open source for gaslighting. In SPoR we explore the Ethics of NLP, critical thinking, social politics of power and Transdisciplinarity.

Social media is a hotbed for gaslighting too, because it is so easy to be deceptive, masquerade, mask and hide one's persona online. This is also why the same people are susceptible to conspiracy theory, Qanon-type cults and group co-dependence. This has all been researched and documented well by Keen (*The Cult of the Amateur*), Hedges (*Empire of Illusion*), Nichols (*The Death of Expertise*), Kakutani (*The Death of Truth*), Jackson (*un-Spun, finding facts in a world of disinformation*) and Van Dijk (*The Culture of Connectivity, A Critical History of Social Media*).

A key part of gaslighting is the speed of seduction. Whilst things start slow, once confidence and trust is established, things take off at light speed and before you know it one is trapped in an abusive relationship that is hard to escape. This is similar to the dynamics and seductions of fundamentalisms (<https://safetyrisk.net/understanding-extremism-and-fundamentalisms/>). Unfortunatley, for those who enter the fray and seek to expose gaslighting and fundamentalisms, are quickly demonized as the enemy (critics of gaslighters) so that the abuse and co-dependence can continue.

I have met people who have been gaslighted for over 20 years in an abusive relationship or trapped in a cult and couldn't escape. The zero cult is such a cult. It takes quite some time and significant cognitive dissonance (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291356571_Cognitive_Dissonance_Theory_Festinger) to realize one has been abused by a close and trusted person and separation is painful.

The gaslighter offers safety and security and uses these as a mask for power. How easy in risk and safety to get power through fear based on compliance to regulations, standards, bureaucracy and the authoritarian ideology of zero.

Part of the power of gaslighting is the romantization of dependence ie. Creating the idea that safety only comes with the presence of this person or this system. This is also accompanied by promises of absolutes like zero, assuring people that everything is under control as long as compliance is maintained.

To watch someone come out of a cult or a gaslighting trap is to watch a person being liberated and free to be themselves but still for some the escape is so painful that they decide to stay as things are. You can read more on gaslighting here: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26614542?seq=1>

Why Risk and Safety are More Prone to Gaslighting

There are many reasons why gaslighting is more pronounced in the risk and safety industry. Some of this has to do with the masculinist nature of these industry and its suppression of feminist discourse (<https://vimeo.com/237511120>). Even when women become advocates for safety, they adopt masculinist discourse and semiotics to explain themselves (<https://safetyrisk.net/can-there-be-a-feminist-safety/>).

However there are some very clear cultural foundations that set up risk and safety for easy pickings for the gaslighter. These are:

The creation of **co-dependence** and anchoring to the risk and safety expert. It is most important to create the myth that people are not safe unless the safety guru/hero is around. This is the kind of language (of heros and guru) that Safety loves to extol, creating the mythology that only Safety knows how to be safe.



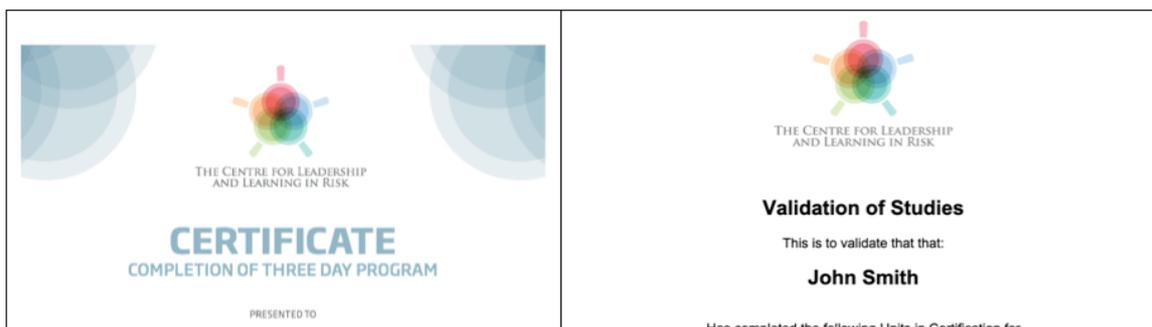
The **suppression of critical thinking** and Transdisciplinarity is also an important part of gaslighting. It is important to demonise any research or critical thinking that comes from outside 'accepted' forms of knowledge. In this way the AIHS Body of Knowledge and WHS curriculum define what is valuable knowledge and what sources of knowing must be rejected.

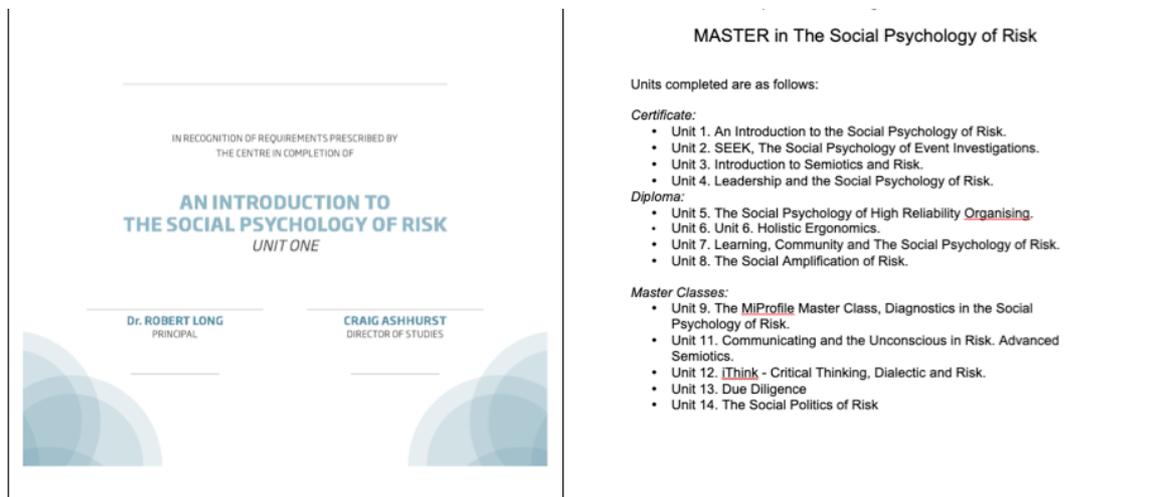
The **applification of compliance** is critical for gaslighting. Any form of dissent, questioning, scepticism or critical thinking must be demonised. The most important thing that follows, is the invisible censorship of who to follow and what to read. Only approved thinking within the camp is acceptable.

The **fixation on the absolute and zero**, is foundational to creating fear and binary opposition. In binary opposition one is not allowed to trust dissenting voices or anything that questions zero. The ideology of zero works on the idea that there can be no other ethical goal when indeed, zero creates more brutalism and bullying than any other risk and safety mantra.

So, if you feel bullied, manipulated or overpowered in risk and safety it is probably that you are being gaslighted already and made to feel guilty for questioning the view of the sanctioned hero.

Certificate, Diploma and Masters Studies in SPoR





The Centre for Leadership and Learning in Risk (<https://cllr.com.au/>) accredits the only studies in the Social Psychology of Risk (SPoR) globally. There are 22 modules of study on offer with the modules 1-4 forming the foundation of the Introductory Certificate. Once 4 modules have been completed then any other modules can be chosen for the completion of a diploma (8 modules) and Master in SPoR (12 modules or equivalent).

However, the accreditation is not the main positive but rather the new knowledge and disposition toward risk one will achieve through such study.

- You can see all the modules on offer here: <https://cllr.com.au/elearning/>
- All modules can be studied in groups or individually and are offered online.
- You can download a full prospectus here: <https://cllr.com.au/register-to-study/cllr-prospectus/>

The obligations for study are to watch recorded videos of classes, keep a reflection journal, completion of homework and practical enactment exercises and a series of Zoom sessions with Dr Long and Dr Ashhurst.

Once 4 modules have been completed you receive a certificate of completion and attainment (example below) and a record of study signed by Dr Long and Dr Ashhurst. Included in the validation of studies is a record of newly achieved Body of Knowledge (download map here: <https://spor.com.au/downloads/posters/>).

An example of course validation includes a list such as the following:

1. Understanding the SPoR Body of Knowledge
2. Demonstrated dialectical and critical thinking at advanced level
3. Understanding SPoR dynamics, culture and risk
4. Advanced understanding of semiotics and semiosis
5. An holistic understanding of ergonomics
6. The application of SPoR to leadership intelligence
7. Understanding of the collective unconscious, culture and risk
8. Understanding theories of learning and development
9. Critical thinking in investigations and human decision making in risk
10. The nature of risk amplification
11. Advanced understanding of the unconscious in communication
12. The diagnostics and dialectics of risk

Skill development includes:

1. iCue Listening
2. Skills in dialogue

3. SEEK approach to incident investigations
4. Sensitivity to semiotics and linguistics
5. Understanding the unconscious and collective unconscious
6. Assessment in Holistic Ergonomics
7. MiProfile Risk Diagnostics
8. Assessment of risk amplification
9. Understanding Due Diligence, Social Politics and Ethics
10. Enhancing Transdisciplinarity in risk
11. Cultural diagnostics
12. Critical thinking

The costs of this study is approximately one third of University studies and offers participants a record of knowledge shared by few in the risk and safety industry.

Participants obtain access to all Dr Long and Dr Ashhurst's Intellectual Property including: all 10 books, an extensive collection of resources offered through Dropbox, access to over 350 passcoded videos and membership to the SPoR support network. The network includes hundreds of people and dozens of organisations currently using SPoR methods in their workplaces, in Australia and globally. Over 50 people who have completed more than 12 modules of study including those in USA, Canada, Middle East, Europe and Australia. It usually takes 8-12 months to complete 4 modules.

If you are interested in learning in SPoR please contact Dr Long for further information rob@cllr.com.au or call 0424547115 to chat about options for you or your organization.

University Masters

It is possible to undertake University studies with Dr Long by thesis. If this is of interest contact Rob at robertlong2@icloud.com

Organising SPoR Study for Yourself or Group

The best way to organize your study is to contact Dr Long at rob@cllr.com.au and he can help you build a course of study with you or if you want a group at your workplace.

Self-Talk and Gaslighting



We all talk to ourselves and are sometimes aware of that little voice in our Mind debating away with beliefs, values and temptations. Self-talk can be helpful or unhelpful, negative and positive and sometimes builds up a sense of self that resonates with the manipulations, seductions and strategies of gaslighters. Gaslighting rarely gets a hold unless it reinforces current views of self-endorsed through self-talk.

In self-talk, our inner self seeks congruence with the outer world. This come from childhood, family dynamics, life experiences, cultural formation and history. Often self-talk results in confirming superstitions, ritual formation and counter-intuitive enactments

as a part of self-regulation. Indeed, many habits and rituals are formed as a result of self-talk 'stories' and narratives. Whilst we may not be aware of it, our dreams also play a part in 'working through' self-talk fears, anxieties and concerns. You can read more on self regulation here: Vohs, K., and Baumeister, R., (2011) *Handbook of Self-Regulation, Research Theory and Applications*. The Guilford Press, New York.

Ethan Kross offers a 'toolbox' of ways of managing self-talk (https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/jan/16/inner-voice-self-criticism-psychologist-ethan-kross-chatter-voice-head?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other). There is also help here: <https://www.verywellmind.com/negative-self-talk-and-how-it-affects-us-4161304> and here: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13164-017-0375-y>

Some suggest that the best way to tackle destructive self-talk is to embrace it (<http://lifecoachmontreal.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Love-Your-Negative-Self-Talk-c3.pdf>) but not all of us have the disposition or psyche to just flip negativity into positivity. Indeed, naïve positivity is also its own problem in self-talk, although advocated by many elite athletes, it can create unreal and punishing expectations we place on ourselves and subsequent self-defeating failures.

Self-talk also plays a role in seduction to conspiracy theories and rejection of expertise. With the advent of social media we are now more able to find consenting other voices that endorse negative self-talk. Nichols (*The Death of Expertise*) discusses the mechanisms in social media that support destructive self-talk. Vygotsky noted that we seek to harmonise self-talk and social talk. This is how the gaslighter is able to reinforce destructive self-talk and build trust because they know how to resonate with your beliefs. The gaslighter can hear in your language where their potential for intrusion is, they are gifted at it.

The gaslighter is able to isolate their victim from dissenting points of view, to both doubt self and reject expertise. Their skill is in dulling down critical thinking and questioning and amplifying resonance with self-doubt and self-image.

There is a helpful worksheet here to get you started: <https://www.winona.edu/resilience/Media/Self-Talk-Worksheet.pdf>

This book is a good resource
https://infidelityrecoveryinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Gaslight-Effect_-How-to-Spo-Stern-Dr.-Robin.pdf

Freebies and Downloads

Don't forget there are free downloads of books by Dr Long here:

Five free books to download
<https://www.humandymensions.com/shop/>

Free posters here:
<https://spor.com.au/downloads/posters/>
Blogs

<https://safetyrisk.net/robert-long/>
Videos
<https://vimeo.com/cllr>
<https://vimeo.com/humandymensions>

The Law and Due Diligence
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/3938199>
Videos against zero ideology



<https://vimeo.com/230093823>

<https://vimeo.com/172195306>

Semiotics Videos

<https://spor.com.au/downloads/semiotics/>

Papers

<https://spor.com.au/downloads/papers/>

Newsletter Archive

<https://spor.com.au/downloads/newsletter-archive/>

Gaslighting and Cultures of Conformity

A lack of critical thinking, discernment and what some call 'epistemic innocence' (systematic naivety) (<https://www.researchgate.net/publication>



[/328817500_Gaslighting_Confabulation_and_Epistemic_Innocence](#)) is common across the risk and safety sector.

The industry itself is oriented towards conformance and auditing conformance against set standards and regulation. This culture of conformity makes it very difficult to raise critical questions about processes because such critical thinking can be easily branded as unsafe or 'risky'. eg. any criticism of zero is deemed anti-safety.

The suppression of critical thinking in the risk and safety sector is observed in the curriculum and various Bodies of Knowledge. The AIHS BoK for example has nothing dedicated to the importance of critical thinking, transdisciplinarity or critical theory.

The two foundations of gaslighting are power and control, the same two dynamics that infuse various approaches towards zero ideology and petty approaches to risk and safety that channel people into binary opposition (<https://vimeo.com/172195306>) and resultant manipulations associated with conformance.

Here is a list of helpful readings to get you started in thinking about gaslighting:

- <https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/attach/journals/oct19asrfeature.pdf>
- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26614542?seq=1>
- http://www.albanylawreview.org/Articles/Vol83_1/0313-Rives-Knapp-Gaslighting-as-a-Tactic-of-Prosecution.pdf

Unfortunately, the challenges of gaslighting are a two edged sword. One needs to trusted reflections of others about the health of relationship with others and at the same time trusting the wrong people for their reflections is th foundation for gaslighting.

If you or someone you love has been a victim to gaslighting perhaps call Lifeline 131114, they have an excellent counseling service that can help.

Have You Participated in the Vision Zero Survey?

Thanks to all of you who have participated in the Vision Zero Survey.

Results continue to show that the large majority of people in risk and safety don't believe in the ideology or favour its use.

With over 1000 participants thus far from all disciplines and levels of employment, this database continues to demonstrate that: zero ideology drives anxiety and dishonesty, people don't believe the common zero slogans and that zero leads to bullying and brutalism in practice.

If you haven't done so you can participate here:

<https://spor.com.au/zero-vision-survey/>

Resources for Risk and Safety people

- <https://semioticon.com/semiotix/>
- <https://www.leahchangelarning.com/blog/what-makes-learning-or-training-sticky>
- <http://poemsandpoetics.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.creativesemiotics.co.uk/blog.html>
- <https://www.gutenberg.org/>
- <https://monoskop.org/Monoskop>
- <http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/>
- https://blog.feedspot.com/australian_politics_blogs/
- <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/critical-thinking-blog-elder-nosich/1373>
- <https://thecriticalblog.wordpress.com/>
- <https://neurosciencenews.com/neuroscience-topics/neuroscience/>
- <https://ebook3000.biz/>
- <https://aeon.co/>
- <https://www.academia.edu/>

Competition – Find the Cat



If you have ever been to my study you will know that every wall is covered in books. And after all these years of newsletters and cat finding I need to state that I actually do have a cat. Cats can not

only get into many odd places but you can also find the presence of a cat with unusual evidence.

Here is a pic of a book shelf not dissimilar to mine, can you find the cat? If you can and are in the first 10 entries I will send you a complementary copy of any book of your choice.

Post your entry to rob@cllr.com.au along with your snail mail address and which of my books you would like (remember 5 are free to download) and if you get in early a book is on your way.

Generally all prizes are gone within 15-30 minutes of every newsletter launch.

Of course, every competition as a by-product seeks to make a critical point about vision, envisioning and perception.

Envisioning Risk

Rob's latest book was released late last year on the nature of perception and vision entitled: *Envisioning Risk, Seeing, Vision and Meaning in Risk*.

Only released as an ebook, you can purchase your copy here:

<https://www.humandimensions.com/product/envisioning-risk-seeing-vision-and-meaning-in-risk/>

You can get a free download of Chapter 1 here:

<https://safetyrisk.net/free-download-envisioning-risk-seeing-vision-and-meaning-in-risk/>

Some detail about the book follows:

(280 pages, 200 Illustrations)

Sale \$19.95

<https://www.humandimensions.com/product/envisioning-risk-seeing-vision-and-meaning-in-risk/>

Overview

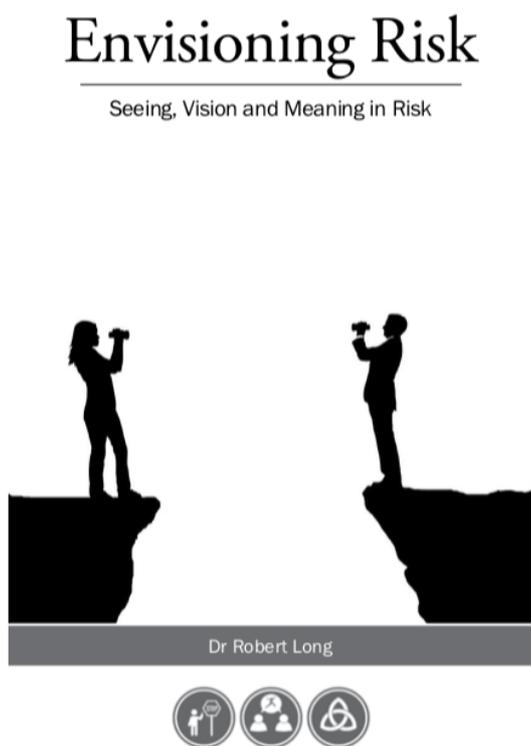
This is a book about seeing: Physically, Psychologically, Teleologically, Socially, Mystically, Transcendently, Imaginatively and Unconsciously and then applying such knowledge to the tackling of risk.

What we see (and understand) is neither straight forward, simple or objective and this affects the way we perceive the world, living and risk. We see the world through our worldview, the paradigm that constructs meaning of what life means and from this we understand being, our semiosis (purpose and meaning) and our visual perception.

This book is structured in three parts:

- The Phenomenon Vision
- The Meaning of Vision and,
- The Practicality of Envisioning

Some key questions: We read and talk about visionaries and leaders with vision but what do they



see and why are people inspired by them? Why do we understand something as visionary and something else as non-visionary? Why are some people able to envision (discern) the outcome of a risk and others not? Why do people see something and others not? What is the connection between insight, vision, perception, imagination, discernment, intuition, wisdom, sagacity and risk? How can we identify a lack of vision? What quashes vision? What enlivens vision? These many other questions are tackled in the writing of this book.

Surely if risk is about faith and trust in the face of uncertainty then one might want to know why some people have better vision than others; physically, intuitively, metaphysically, prophetically and poetically. These are some of the dimensions of vision that will be discussed in this book.

The choice of the word 'envision' for this book has special meaning, it conveys the concept of something in one's own Mind (embodied in head, heart and gut being) and articulated to another. Envisioning is associated with the transference of vision and involves: learning, dreaming, imagining, listening, helping, visualisation, discovery, discerning and creating.

The idea of envisioning is about much more than just looking and seeing. Envisioning is about more than just physical perception and extends to an holistic way of knowing that is beyond simple cognition. Envisioning is about images in the Mind (read embodied person, not the brain), about possibilities and fore-seeing, sometimes things (socially, politically and ethically) that others don't see. Fore-seeing is not about magic but about understanding the trajectory of things and where they will take you. Prophecy is not about predicting the future but about fore-telling the bloody obvious. For example, if the risk industry continues to bully people, be bogged down in paperwork, dehumanize people and fixate on numerics then don't be surprised if no one wants to join in. No one wants to join in on checklist thinking and policing metrics.

Vision is synonymous with risk, no risk - no vision. Those with vision and visionaries don't play life 'safe', there is little vision in safety and compliance. If one sets one's sights on safety and compliance as a rule of life then vision has very little chance of emerging.

Anyone who envisions presents a risk trajectory. Most often those with vision come from outside orthodoxies, they challenge stasis and are usually ostracized for it. Usually envisioning is not a popularity contest but speaks 'truth to power' in naming futures. This book studies a number of visionaries, all outside of the camp who made a difference to the lives of many. Envisioning is only visionary if it embraces the Faith-Hope-Love-Justice (FHLJ) dialectic.

The FHLJ dialectic is characteristic of all those who envision something better than stasis, that is: humanizes persons, develops community, builds Socialite and diminishes Technique.

Feature Profile - Dr Craig Ashhurst



Many of you will know of the work of Dr Craig Ashhurst, a long time member and Director of Studies with CLLR.

Craig completed his PhD at ANU in 2020 and you can view his PhD here:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/202932>

I have known Craig for over 30 years and we



offer many of the programs in CLLR together. Craig's unique skills in education and training, his knowledge of wicked problems and collective coherence is much sought after by organisations and in governments.

Craig runs a consultancy called Niche Thinking <http://www.nichethinking.net.au/Home.html> and assists people, groups and organisations in critical, transdisciplinary and leadership thinking.

Craig and I are available together or individually to offer Zoom workshops, presentations, longitudinal studies and short 1 hour presentations on many aspects of risk and safety not covered by anyone globally.

Topics include:

- Introduction to Social Psychology of Risk
- Introduction to Wicked Problems
- Developing Collective Coherence in Organisations
- Ethics and politics in organisations
- Why semiotics?
- Developing transdisciplinary teams
- iThink, a pathway to critical thinking in risk

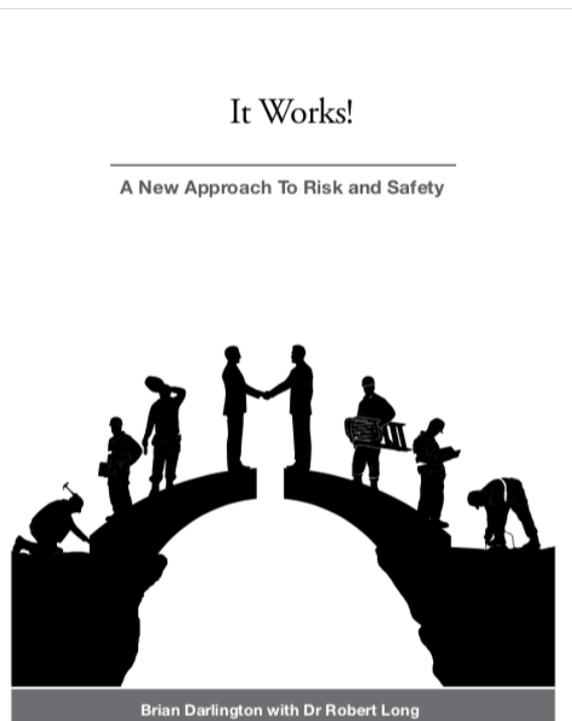
Preview of Next Book

The next book due for release in March 2021 is entitled '**It Works! A New Approach to Risk and Safety**' This book is a practical documentation of the way Social Psychology of Risk (SPoR) helps organization tackle risk.

The book is co-written with Brian Darlington (Group Head of Safety and Health Mondi Group) and documents how SPoR enlivens organisations to better do risk and safety in organisations.

Brian and Rob take readers on a journey on discovery, from the first engagement with SPoR to the roll out of SPoR skills, tools and practices across a large organization. The book shows how: iCue Listening, Workspace, Headsapce and Groupspace, One Brain Three Minds and SPoR skills enable a new approach to how risk and safety can be envisioned.

Brian is located in Europe and the book will be launched in paperback from Vienna and in Australia as an ebook. If you want to pre-order copies you can email rob@cllr.com.au



Some Intersting Reading

- Are You a Digital Hoarder?
- <https://neurosciencenews.com/digital-hoarding-17595/>
- What keeps love alive
- [https://www.brainpickings.org/?mc_cid=c0c757aba3&mc_eid=\[a7e0756c1a\]](https://www.brainpickings.org/?mc_cid=c0c757aba3&mc_eid=[a7e0756c1a])
- The body as mediator
- https://aeon.co/essays/the-phenomenology-of-merleau-ponty-and-embodiment-in-the-world?utm_source=Aeon+Newsletter&utm_campaign=6e6c2e436f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_12_06_11_18&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_411a82e59d-6e6c2e436f-71232212
- Why aren't we wearing better masks?
- https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2021/01/why-arent-we-wearing-better-masks/617656/?utm_source=pocket-newtab-intl-en
- Neoliberalism causes social disconnection
- <https://bpspsychub.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/bjso.12438>

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