

Emanuele Santanche
Leadership coach for technology

<https://emanuelesantanche.com/>

The Secrets of Management

How embracing them gives you an edge

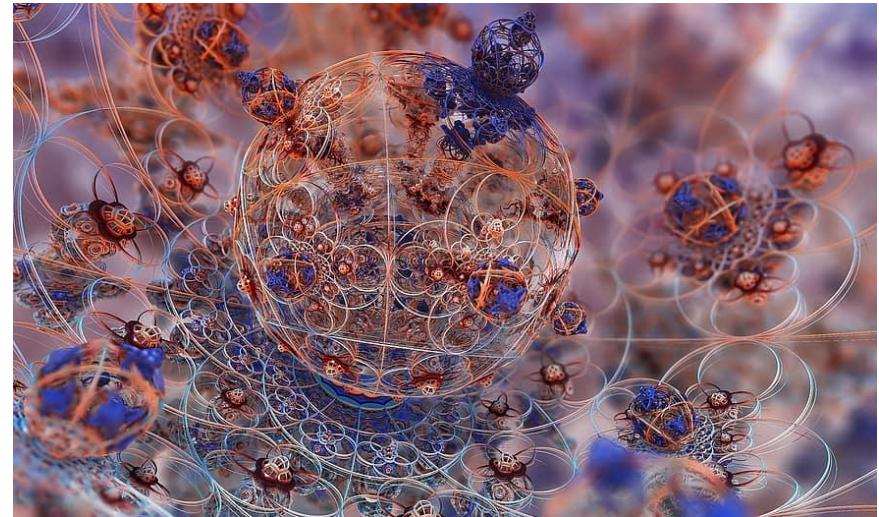


Is this course for you?

This course is for businesses that rely on complex activities requiring creativity.

If your business doesn't, or it's fully automated, this course is not for you.

Management in your case can be old-style and it will cause little damage.





Why secrets?

Why is this course titled The Secrets of Management?

What is secret about management?

Nothing, everything is out there to be learned.





So what?

Why am I saying that what I teach is secret?





Let me add insult to injury

Many of the secrets I'll teach you here
have been known for many decades.

Books that expound them are old.





When I say that they are secret, I mean ...

... that most workplaces ignore them or even blatantly refuse to adopt them.





Good news

This is good news for you.

If you make an effort to understand these secrets, you can use them to your advantage.

In the meantime, your competitors will be stuck using obsolete management practices.





Culture shock

People refuse to adopt these secrets because they don't want to experience the culture shock that would hit them if they embrace them.





Why management?

Management is an activity that is very common in human life.

When activities are complex and require creativity, our management often reveals itself to be inadequate or even counter-productive.



**Secret: definition of
management**



Management is about results

You are doing management if you organize human activities to get meaningful results.





Baking a cake

You do management when you read a recipe for a cake and follow its instructions.

You are organizing your own human activity and the meaningful result is a cake.





A painter does management

A painter does management: she organizes her own activity to get, as a result, a painting.





Adolf Hitler

Was Adolf Hitler doing management when he ordered his soldiers to jump on the top of a wardrobe for no reason?

No, there is no meaningful result in sight.





Agile team

They self-organise their activities to produce, as a result, a software application. They do management.

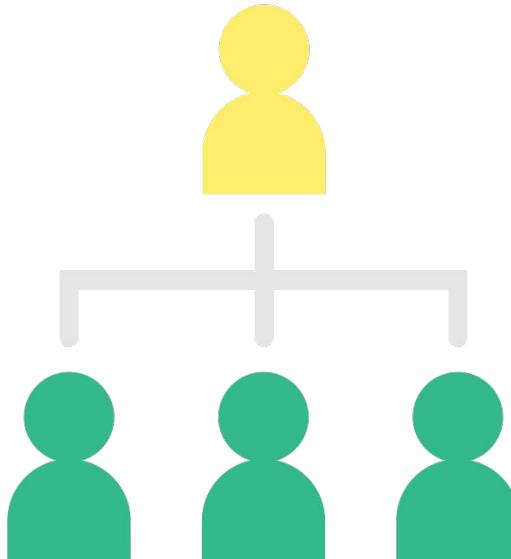




Why is this a secret?

It is one because people keep thinking that management is about managers, power, hierarchy, accountability and control.

Instead, it's about results.



**Secret: task splitting
doesn't work**



What is task splitting?

It's a way to organise activities splitting them into subtasks and assigning each of them to a person.

The activity will be successfully performed if all the subtasks are.



It worked when tasks were simple

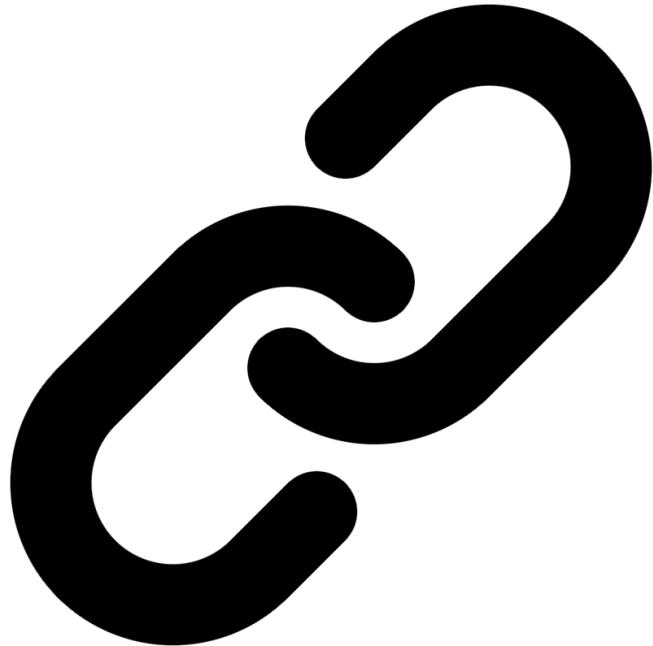
It worked when tasks were simple and required no creativity.





Tasks have now to be analysed in their entirety

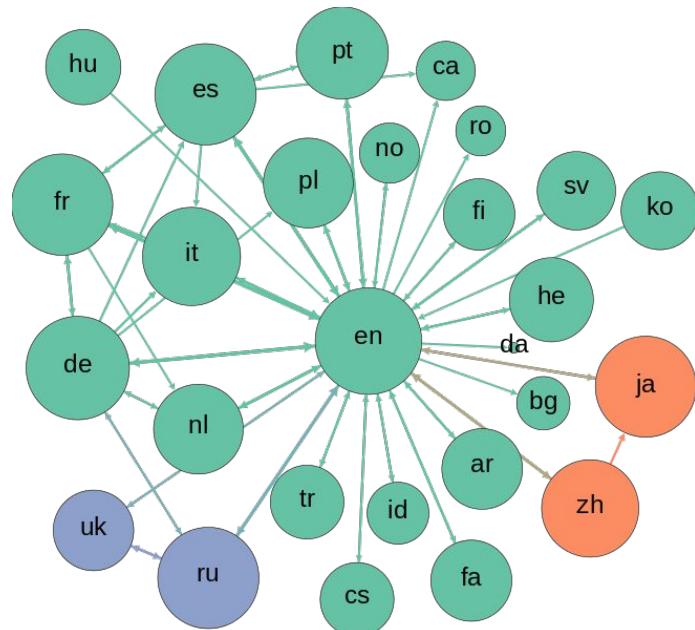
Subtasks are linked and the links are not trivial.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because people keep thinking that splitting tasks still works.



**Secret: change doesn't
happen overnight**



Habit change

To change the way an activity is managed
is like to change a habit.





It takes 60 to 240 days

According to research, to change a habit takes 60 to 240 days.





Edwards Deming

He thought that meaningful change in management takes three years to happen.

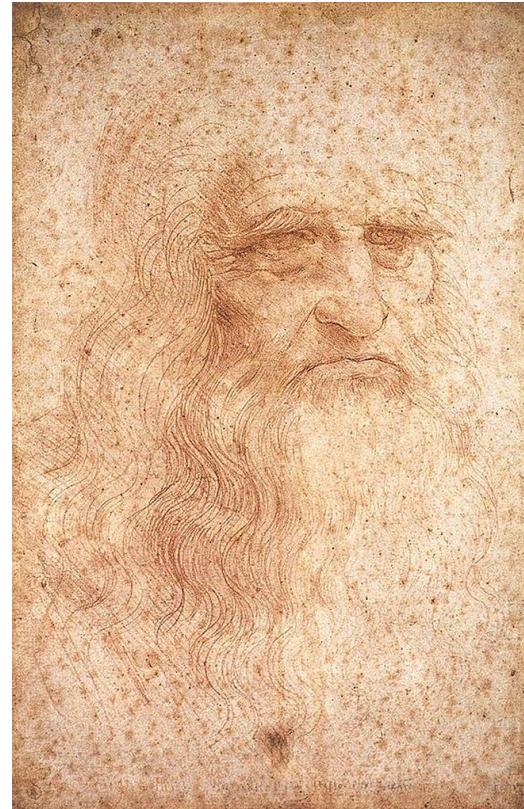




Why is this a secret?

It is one because many managers expect change to happen quickly.

They just hire an expert and they think that in a couple of days they are done.

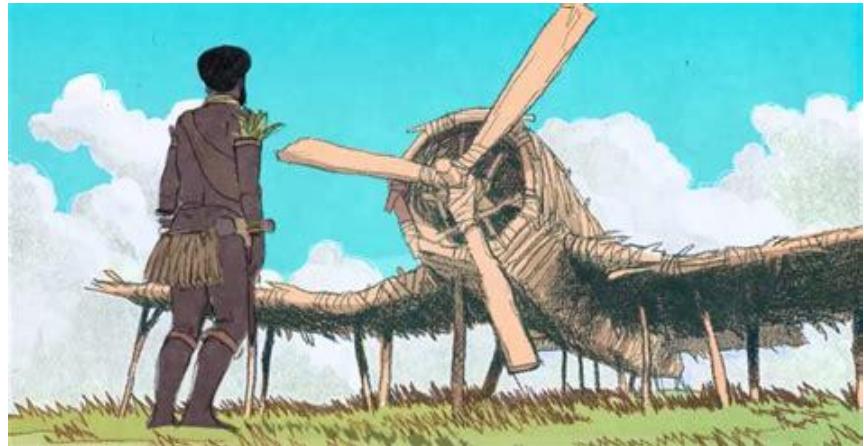


Secret: cargo cults



What a cargo cult is

In the context of management, a cargo cult is a way to organise activities that is blindly adopted without trying to understand it.

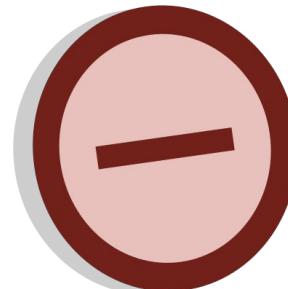




How does a cargo cult affect results?

It may affect them positively or negatively.

Nobody actually knows.





A cargo cult reduces our ability to understand

The very fact that a cargo cult is adopted blindly reduces our ability to understand.





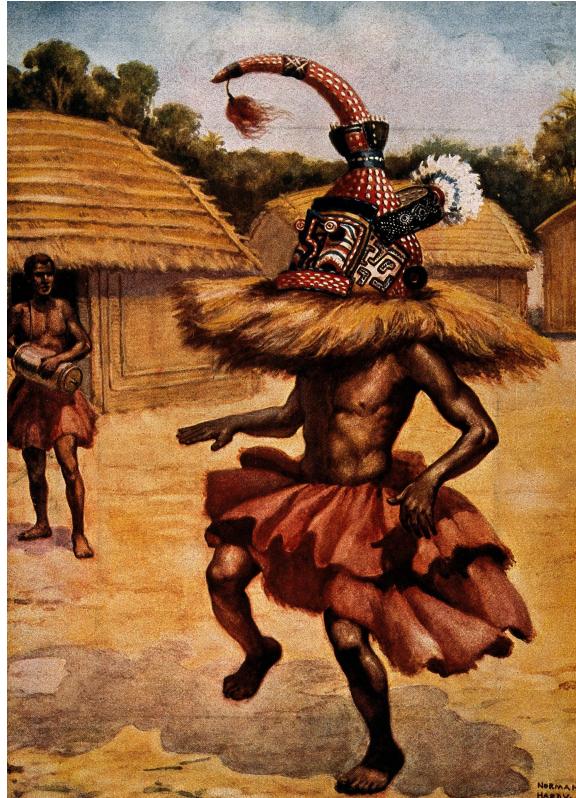
It makes us stupid

If we are not allowed to try to understand,
we become stupid and results will suffer.



Why is this a secret?

It is one because managers keep following cargo cults.



Secret: ceremonies



Ceremonies are examples of cargo cult

I'm spending a Secret only for them because they are becoming popular.





Examples of ceremonies

Stand-up meetings, sprint planning, planning poker, retrospectives, sprint reviews.

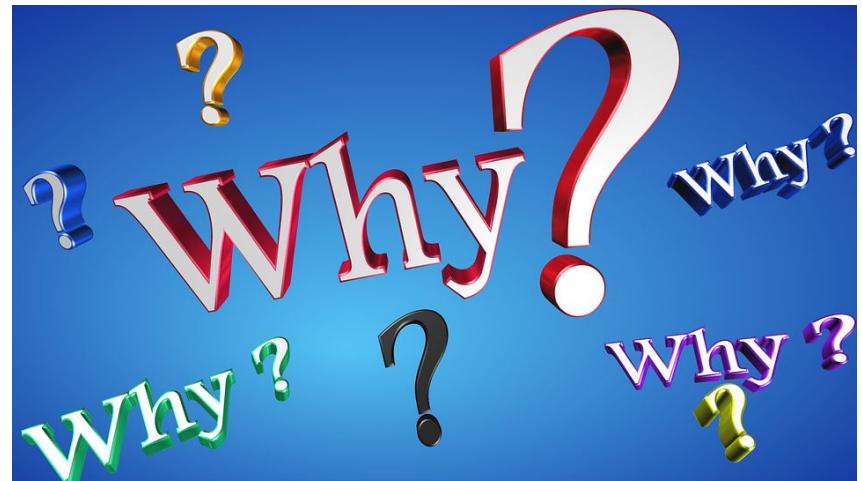




Ceremonies are blindly adopted

No understanding is required.

Nobody is allowed to ask why they have
to do ceremonies.





What happens if you stop asking why?

If you stop asking yourself why you are doing what you are doing — why you are doing ceremonies for instance — you become stupid.

It doesn't matter that you can solve differential equations.

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = xe^t$$

**Secret: diversity is
useless if people can't
speak up**



Humanæ

Humanæ is a photographic work by Angélica Dass. It's an attempt to document human beings' true colors. We are not just white, yellow, black or red. Angélica found that our skin color can be one of at least 4,000.

Happily, we are more diverse than we usually imagine.





Diversity is a resource

Diversity means that you hire white people, black ones, men, women, introverts, extroverts, religious, atheists.

You like the idea of increasing the likelihood that they will see things differently from you.



Photo by Kseniia Samoylenko on Unsplash



Diversity will improve problem solving and creativity

You take the risk of taking onboard people who will see things differently from you because you know that diversity will improve problem solving and creativity.





But if people can't speak up, diversity is lost

If people can't speak up, they can't express the unconventional ideas their diversity suggests to them.

This makes diversity useless.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because a lot of companies have a culture that allows for no speaking up.

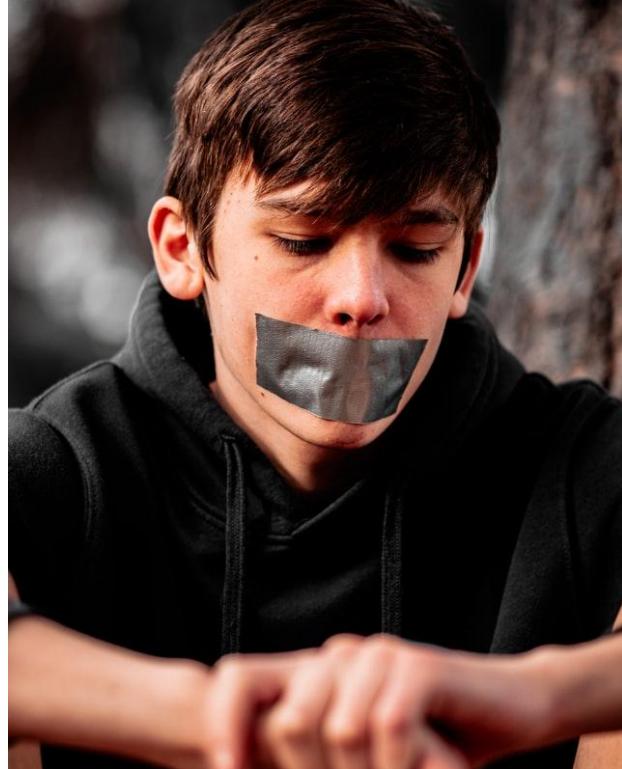


Photo by Jackson Simmer on Unsplash

**Secret: estimates don't
reduce uncertainty**



Estimates are made so that deadlines can be set

Often managers make estimates and set deadlines.

They think that deadlines will increase certainty when there is a lack of it.





But the opposite happens

When tasks are complex, require creativity and call for a flexible approach, deadlines try to enforce certainty and fail.





The task may require more time

In this case, workers will have to do overtime reducing the quality of the output and giving up any analysis of alternatives that could save time and produce more meaningful results.

The end product may work, but it may be unmaintainable and have to be discarded later.





Messy result

The uncertainty of delivery time may have been reduced only to be incorporated in the final product, in its messy structure, hidden or not so hidden defects, side effects, irrelevant features, wrong and useless ones.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because estimates and deadlines are still commonly imposed on employees even when a smarter approach is needed.



Photo by Andre Hunter on Unsplash



**Secret: experience is not
enough**



Can you learn management on the job?

It's generally thought that management is something you learn on the job and that no training is required.



Photo by Austin Distel on Unsplash



Will experience teach you?

You get promoted to a managerial position because you achieved a goal.

You get no training and start playing the manager hoping that experience will teach you.

It won't.





You need to use the scientific approach

You need a theory and experiments meant to prove or disprove it.

Without a theory you can't devise any experiment, which means that you can't learn.



Photo by Louis Reed on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because the manager who uses superstitious methods to make things happen is all too common.





**Secret: fear improves
nothing**



Fear interferes with our cognitive processes

When tasks are complex and require creativity, fear interferes with our cognitive processes making us less productive and reducing our ability to solve problems.



Photo by Aarón Blanco Tejedor on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because many managers think that, instead, they must use fear to make employees do their job.



Photo by Charl Folscher on Unsplash

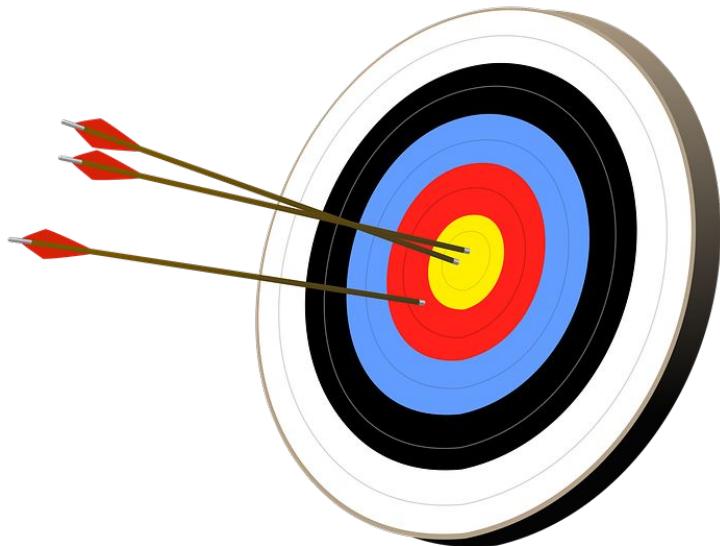
**Secret: management by
goals is obsolete**



Everyone their goal

GOAL SETTING

Traditionally goals are given individually.
Large goals are chopped into small ones
and the latter are assigned to employees.





It may work if tasks are not interdependent

Individual goals may work when they are not linked to each other. More and more often, they are instead.





Goals may conflict

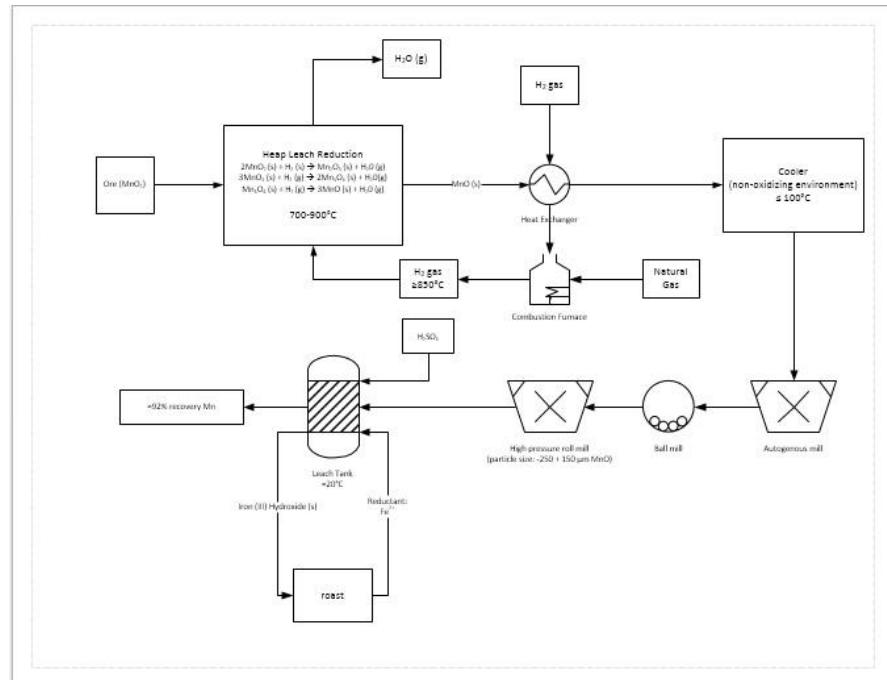
This means that individual goals may conflict. To achieve his own goal, an employee may find herself fighting with others and wanting them to fail.



Instead, analyse the system

The entire system that produces results has to be analysed.

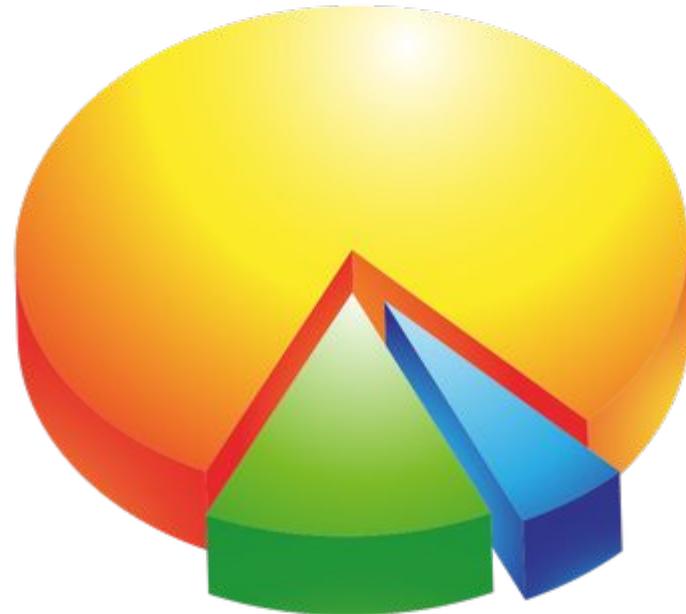
We have to understand how results are produced and find the best way to fine tune the system.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because the practice of assigning individual goals is still predominant.



**Secret: management can
happen without
managers**



Management is about results

Management is how we organise our activities to produce results.





There may be managers or not

Results matter, not managers.

Maybe results are better without
managers, maybe they are better with.

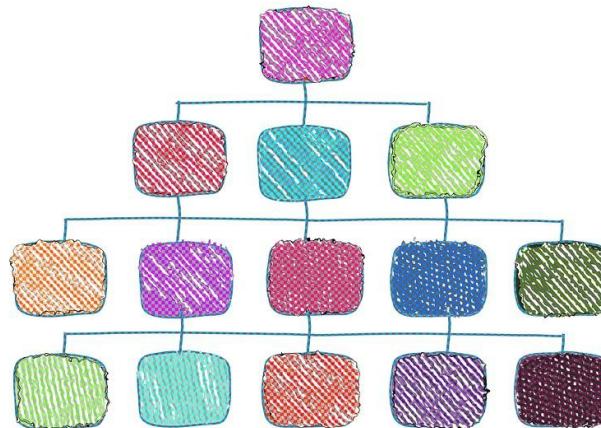
As usual, theories and experiments are
needed to figure out in which case
results improve.



Photo by Austin Distel on Unsplash

Why is this a secret?

It is one because it's widely believed that management is about managers.



**Secret: management is
not about control, it's
about results**



Management is not to be in control

Management is how we organise our activities and the ones of others so that we can produce specific results.





We may have to release control

To get the results we want, we may need to partially release control.

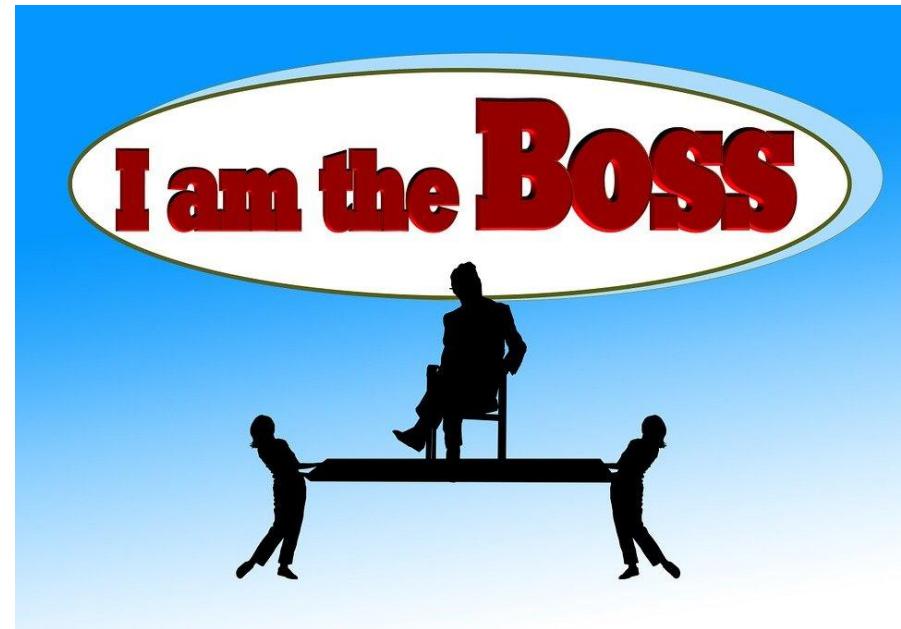


Photo by krakenimages on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because in a lot of working environments control is deemed as more important than results.



**Secret:
micromanagement kills
motivation**



Micromanagement is distrust

The manager who wants to supervise work in its smallest details sends this message to employees: "I don't trust you."





Distrust demotivates

Distrust demotivates us. It makes us less productive and blunts our problem solving skills.



Photo by Maria Lupon on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because micromanagement is still quite common especially where managers suffer from insecurity.



Photo by Icons8 Team on Unsplash

**Secret: money doesn't
motivate**



Theories and experiments confirm that money demotivates

There are many theories with associated experiments that confirm the demotivating power of money.





Incentives make us feel manipulated

When we are promised incentives if we increase our productivity, we feel manipulated.

Our motivation plummets.

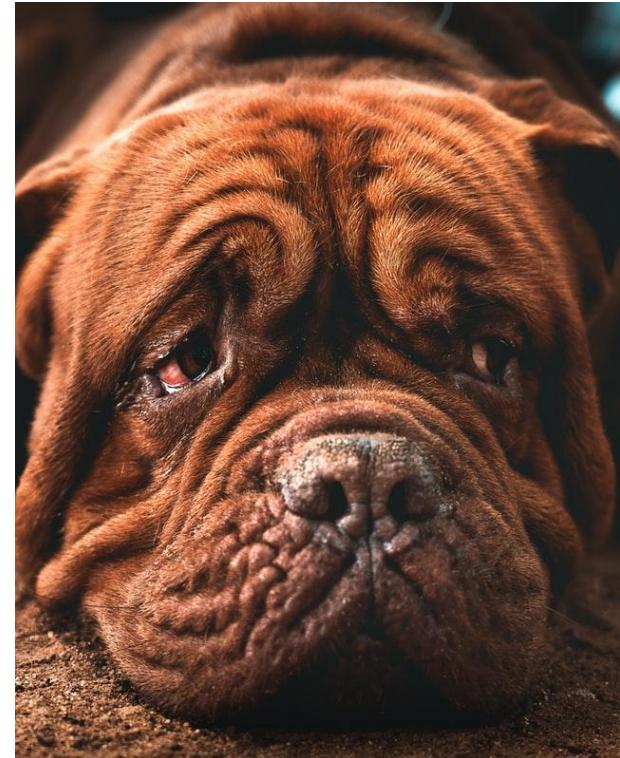


Photo by Rakesh Shetty on Unsplash



Lack of money demotivates as well

If we are struggling to make a living, we can't focus on our tasks.

The struggle absorbs our attention.

Even if we like our job, we won't be able to devote to it our undivided energies.

This damages our motivation.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because a lot of companies are still shelling out money thinking that it will improve productivity.



**Secret: motivation
matters**



Intellectual activities are very sensitive to motivation.

Activities that are complex or require creativity are sensitive to motivation.

Motivation is likely to make the difference between success and failure.



Photo by Brooke Cagle on Unsplash



Motivation can't be enforced

You can't force anyone to be motivated.

Motivation is a child of freedom.



Photo by DESIGNECOLOGIST on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because many workplaces are very demotivating and nobody thinks it's a problem.

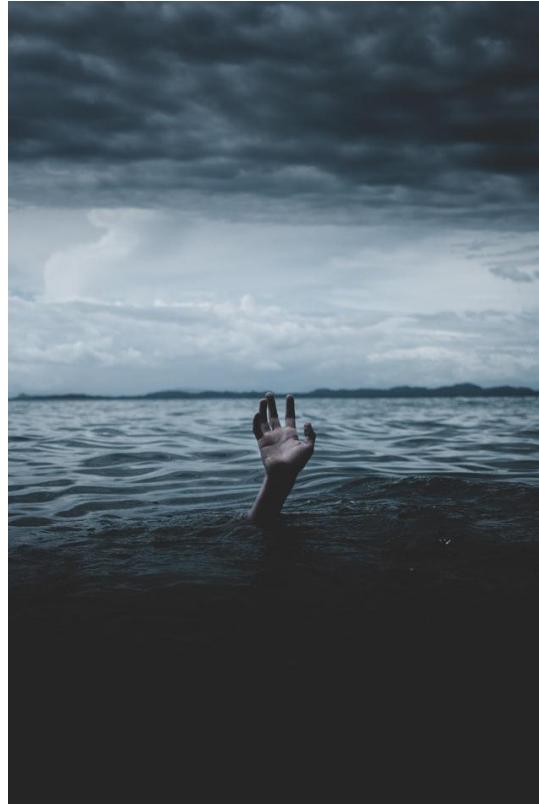


Photo by Ian on Unsplash

**Secret: old notions of
accountability don't
make any sense any more**



Accountability is stick-and-carrot management

Accountability is just another name for the old stick-and-carrot management style.





The stick-and-carrot approach is very old

Humanity has been using sticks and carrots to make things happen for thousands of years.





We have survived the stick-and-carrot disease so far

It's incredible what we have been able to achieve despite sticks and carrots.

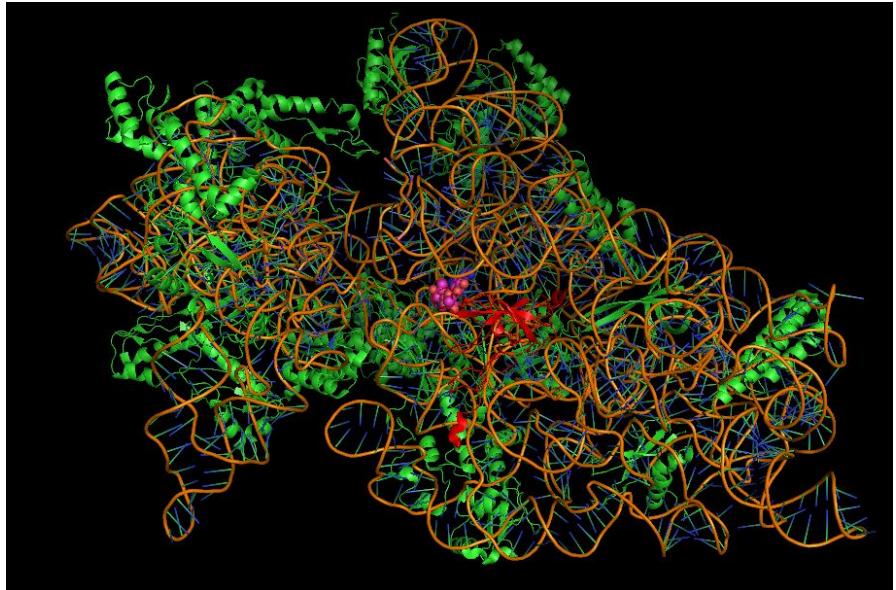


Photo by sporlab on Unsplash



Tasks are complex now

Just now tasks are getting more and more complex and need creativity.





Sticks and carrots kill motivation

Stick and carrots kill motivation while the latter is essential when performing complex tasks.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because our society is based on sticks and carrots.

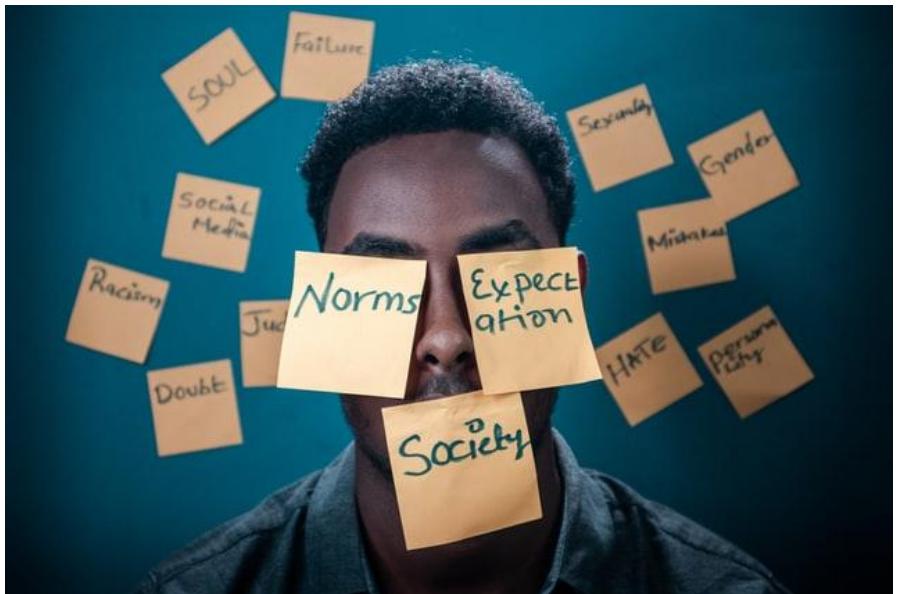


Photo by Yasin Yusuf on Unsplash

**Secret: pathological
company cultures make
success less likely**



Pathological, Bureaucratic, Generative

According to Ron Westrum, a sociologist, organizations can be classified into three typologies: Pathological, Bureaucratic, Generative.





Pathological cultures make success less likely

Jez Humble, Developer Advocate at Google Cloud, performed deep research showing that pathological cultures make success less likely.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because a lot of companies still have pathological cultures.



Photo by Jerry Zhang on Unsplash

**Secret: persuasion is bad
for results**

If you persuade, you don't trust

If you try to persuade someone, you are telling them, implicitly, that you don't trust them with understanding why they should do what you think they should do.





Persuasion demotivates

This is demotivating and hurtful to resu



Photo by Cristian Newman on Unsplash

What to do?

Tell them the reasons behind the activity you want performed. Then organise an experiment.



Photo by Louis Reed on Unsplash



Allow people to see

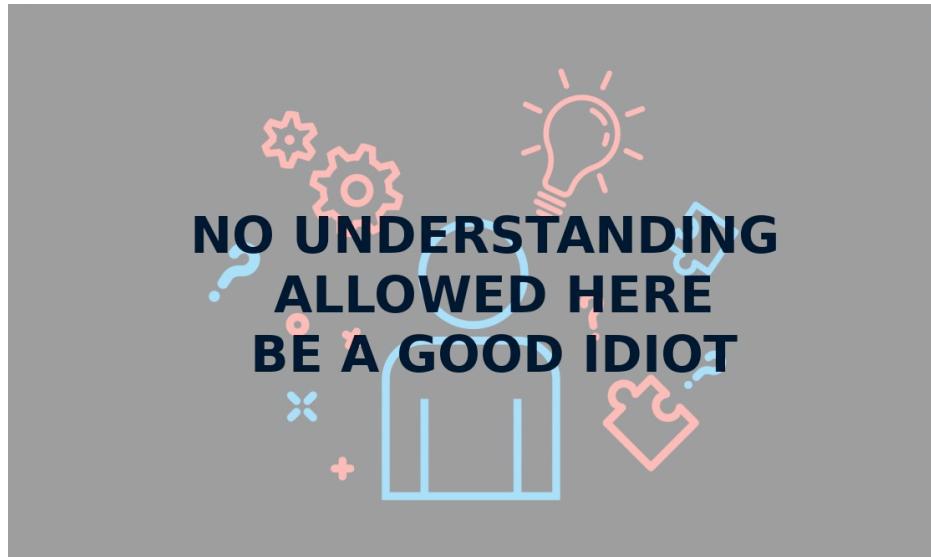
Allow people to see the benefits of doing that activity. Or, maybe, to see that there are none.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because in a lot of companies managers demotivate employees persuading them to perform activities they don't understand or that generate no value.



**Secret: pressure makes
things worse**



Under pressure

Many managers know no better than putting employees under pressure.





Will things happen faster?

They think that this will make things happen faster.



Photo by Guillaume Jaillet on Unsplash



No system thinking allowed

They make no experiment to validate this theory. They make no effort to do system thinking.

It's cargo cult.

They damage results this way.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because in a lot of companies managers get no training to understand what needs to be done and what hurts end results.



Photo by Leon on Unsplash

**Secret: psychological tests,
when hiring, make your
company a hive of clones**



Don't use psychological tests

If your company receives hundreds or thousands of applications for a job, don't use psychological tests to weed candidates.





You end up with clones

You end up with people who are clones of each other. You need diversity, instead, which will improve problem solving.



Photo by ammar sabaa on Unsplash



Fear of the different

If having to deal with people who thinks differently from you makes you scared, you may want to do something for your insecurity.

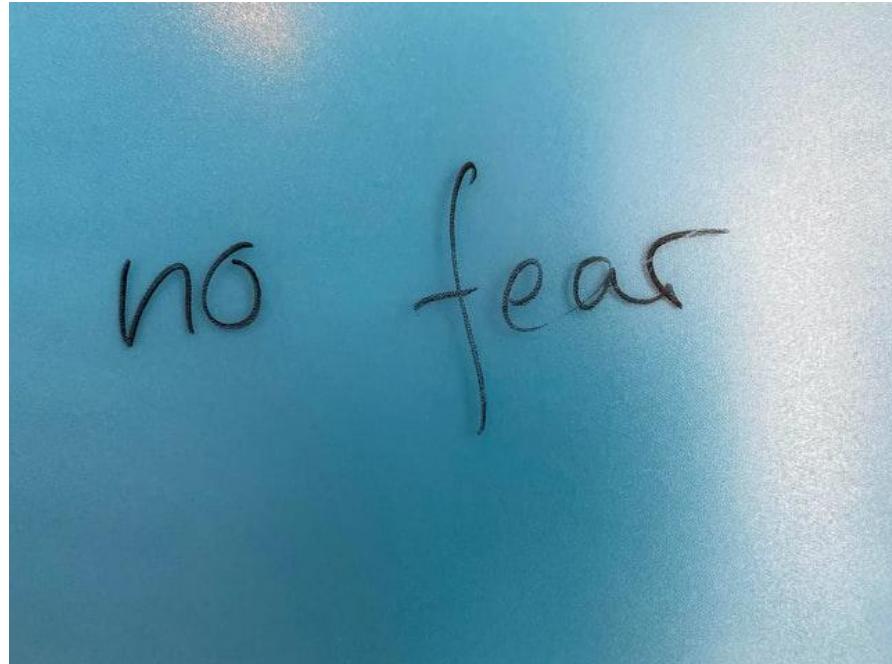


Photo by Etienne Girardet on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because psychological tests are common and are even getting some AI boost.



Photo by Green Chameleon on Unsplash

**Secret: psychology
matters**

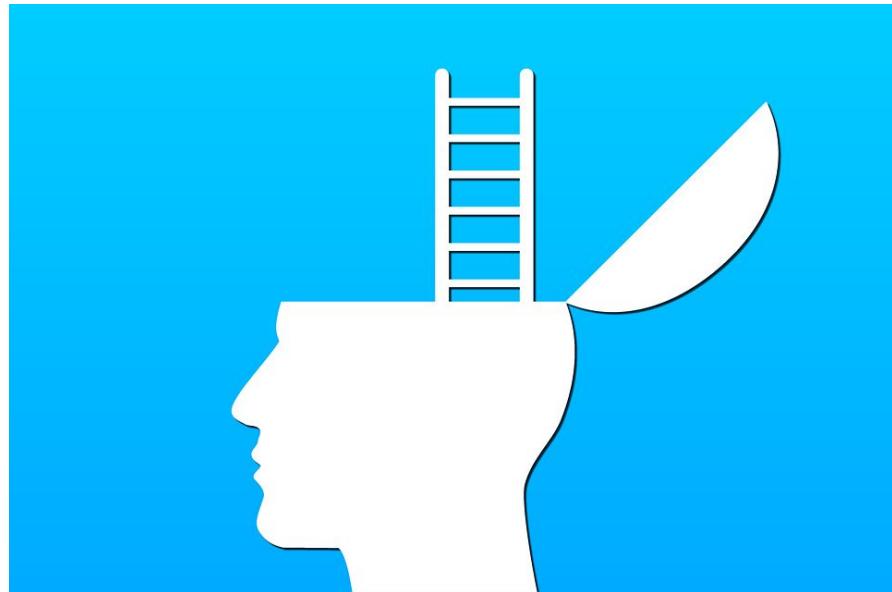


We can't ignore psychology

Psychology is not part of any traditional training in management.

Many decades ago, this omission wasn't causing big problems.

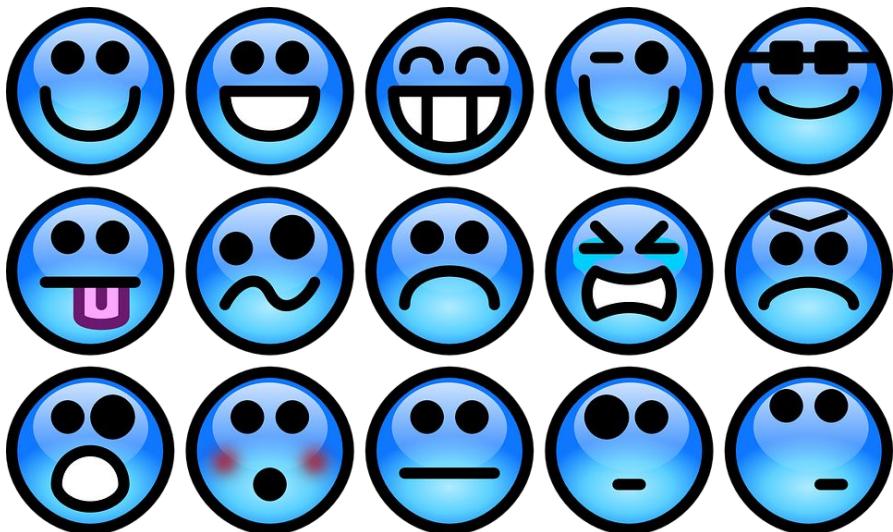
Tasks were simple and creativity was not required.





Now we can't ignore it

Now, instead, it's not possible to ignore it and still expect good results.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because in many companies psychology is still a big absent.



Secret: quality motivates



Quality motivates

When we are allowed to do a quality job,
we are more motivated.

Who would feel motivated if they have to
do shoddy work?





Motivation means better productivity

Better motivation means increased productivity, which compensates for the higher cost of quality.



Photo by Andreas Klassen on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because managers think that quality is an extra cost customers won't pay for.



Photo by Clay Banks on Unsplash

**Secret: schools manage
teaching and do it very
badly**

Schools manage teaching very badly

Schools are a very good example of how not to manage.

They manage the activity of teaching and they do it very badly.



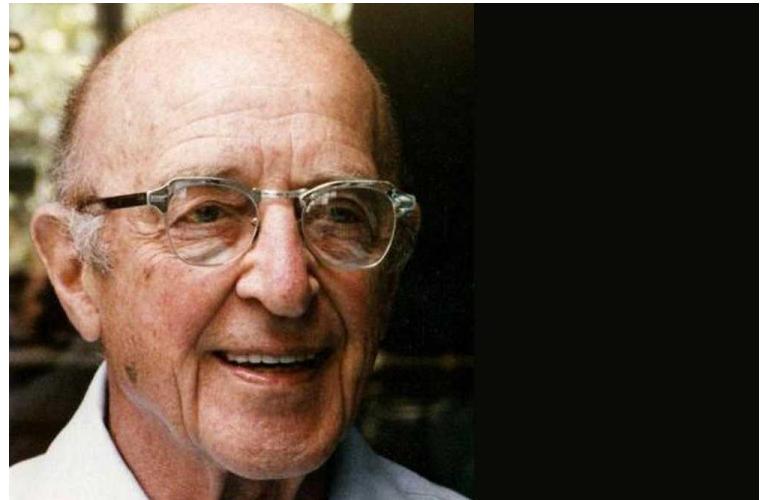
Photo by Eric Garcetti



Carl Rogers and schools

Carl Rogers developed the concept of Unconditional Positive Regard, which is the foundation of modern psychology.

He thought that schools are unimportant or hurtful.

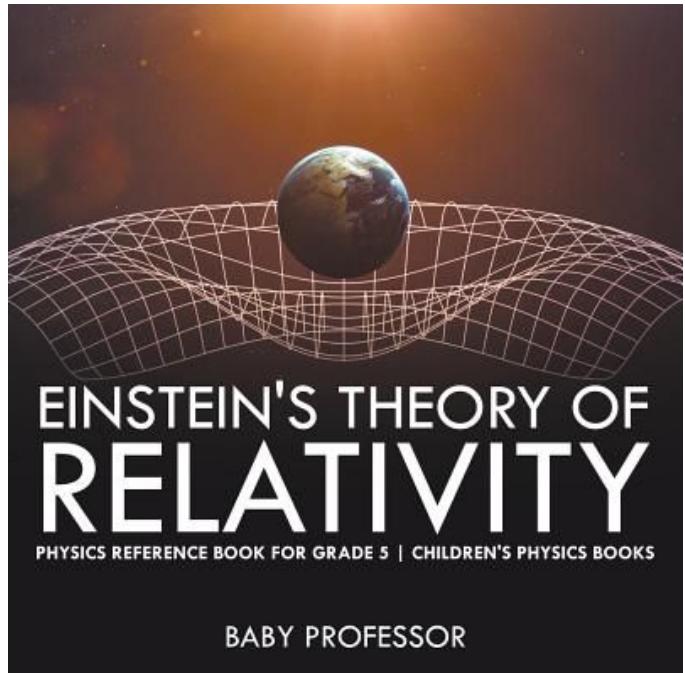




What kind of activity is learning?

It's an activity that requires a lot of creativity because students have to create meaning where, in their eyes, there is none.

It deals with things that have to be understood, it's very complex.





When activities are complex and require creativity...

Complex activities that require creativity
need trust.



Photo by Jannis Lucas on Unsplash



Schools are based on distrust, a powerful demotivator

Teachers don't trust children and want their minds to be stuffed with the prescribed quantity of notions.

They don't care if children understand those notions or not.

They don't trust children with understanding.



Photo by Kimberly Farmer on Unsplash



Schools use sticks and carrots

Grades are a modern variation on the old theme of sticks and carrots.

But between the stick and the carrot there is a jackass.

Should I comment on a jackass' IQ?





Why is this a secret?

It is one because schools still manage teaching very badly and don't care.

Many businesses adopt their same practices.





Secret: behaviouralism is wrong



B. F. Skinner

He was a psychologist who performed experiments on rats.

He decided that what he found from his experiments is valid for human beings as well.



Photo by Ykmyks on Wikimedia Commons



Skinner was popular

He met the desires of many parents who wanted scientific approval for what they were already doing.

They were treating their kids in the same way as Skinner was treating his rats.



Image by Mohamed Hassan from Pixabay



We are not rats

But we human beings are not rats.

We are not just behaviour.

We are capable of affection and trust as well, rats aren't.



Photo by Mathilde Langevin on Unsplash



Skinner ignored this part of human nature

He was ignoring that we human beings are capable of much more than simple behaviour.

When we ignore a part of the reality we want to understand, hardly we reach correct conclusions.



Photo by NeONBRAND on Unsplash



Behaviouralism is insulting and depressing

We human beings flourish when our nature is appreciated in its entirety.

We feel insulted when it's cruelly mangled and reduced to pure behaviour.

We may use depression or rebellion as ways to defend ourselves.

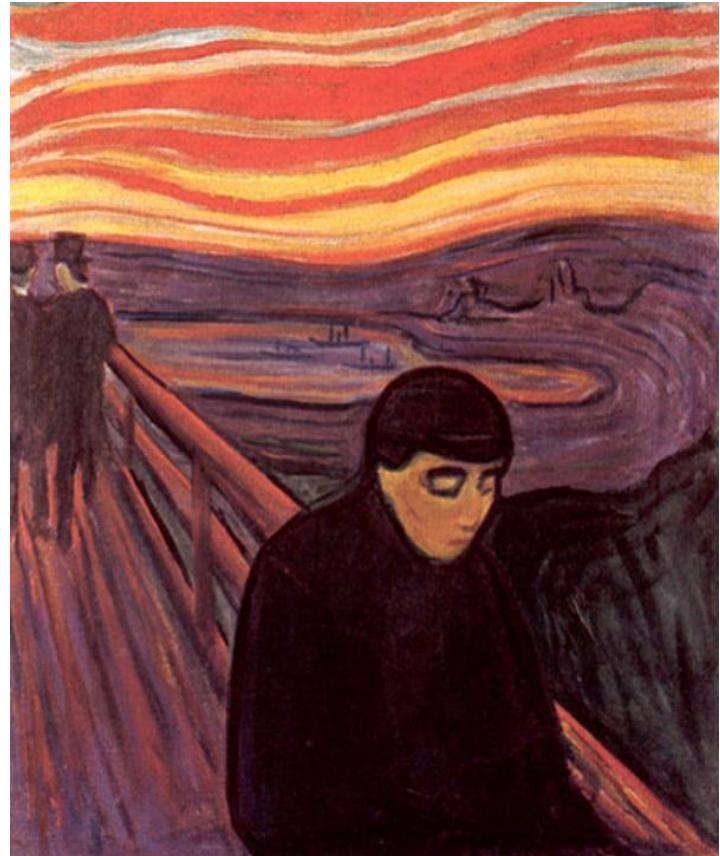




Behaviouralism kills motivation

Behaviouralism makes children grow up to live a life of quiet despair.

In the workplace, it makes employees unmotivated, unproductive and less able to solve problems.





Why is this a secret?

It is one because we are still treated like rats at school and in the workplace.



Secret: system thinking



Take a task and break it into subtasks

In the 19th century a way to manage work was invented that started with taking a task and breaking it into subtasks.



Photo by Lavi Perchik on Unsplash



Each worker a subtask

Each subtask was then assigned to a worker.

The final result was deemed to be the sum of the parts.



Photo by Ross Sneddon on Unsplash



Edwards Deming discovered that tasks are getting too complex

In the '50s, Edwards Deming discovered that tasks were getting too complex to be treated that way.





Enter system thinking

He developed the idea of system thinking.
It's about dealing with the system that
produces results in its entirety.

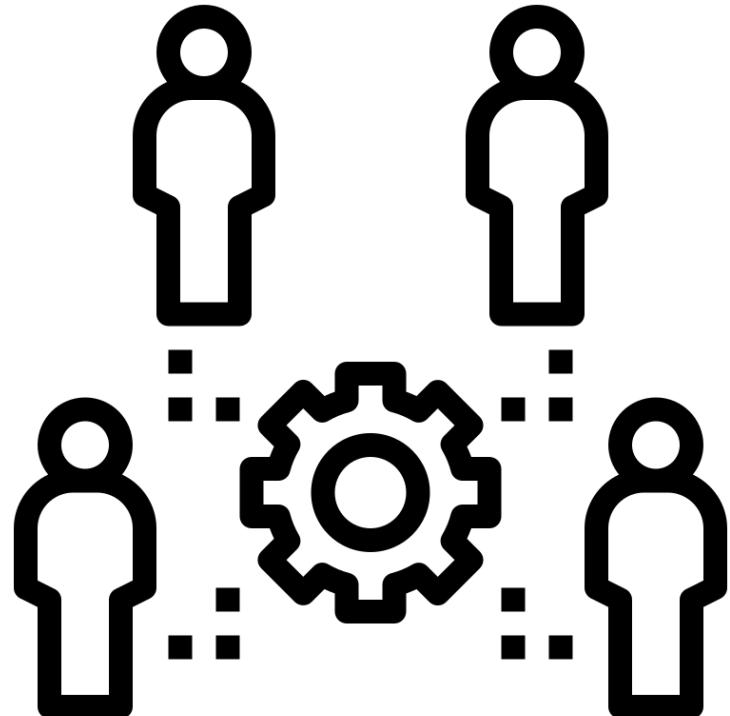


Systems by Eucalyp from the Noun Project



Why is this a secret?

It is one because managers keep thinking that the total is the sum of the parts and that they can manage the parts each one separately without considering the interdependencies.



Interdependence by Nithinan Tatah from the Noun Project

**Secret: to punish
employees who make
mistakes is superstition**



Dancing to make it rain

If you dance to make it rain, everyone will tell you that you are being superstitious and wasting time.



Photo by Munkhbayar.B on Wikimedia Commons



It's the same if you punish an employee

It's the same if you punish an employee who makes a mistake expecting that she won't make the same mistake next time.

It's superstition, a waste of time.





Why is this a secret?

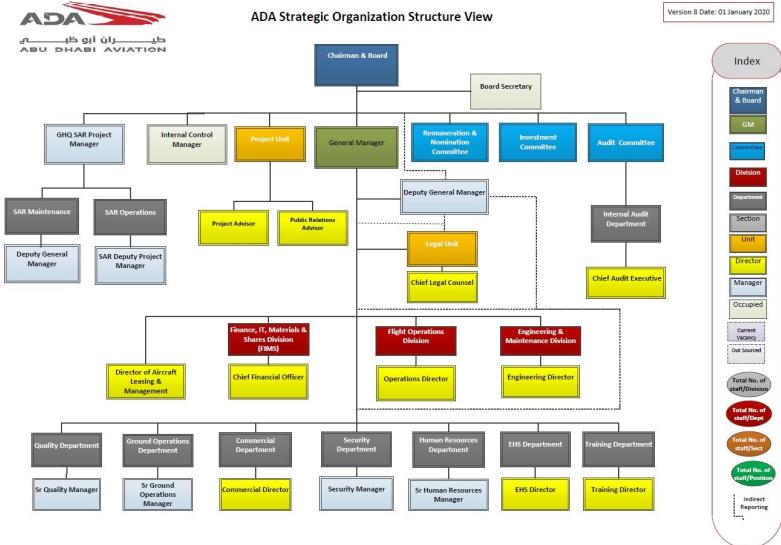
It is one because a lot of managers still punish employees.



**Secret: trust saves you
money and time**

Distrust makes you add managerial levels

Distrust makes you add managerial levels supposed to check and double-check employees' activities.





Just the time...

Just the time needed to make information seep down from the top is a big waste.

Information that should climb up may have even more difficulties.





Managers between clients and workers

Managerial roles pop up between clients and workers because who trusts them with talking directly?

Information will flow more slowly and get distorted.



Information by Gregor Cresnar from the Noun Project



Distrust is demotivating

Distrust is demotivating, it makes people less productive.

The thicker the distrust you breathe in a company, the lower the chances of success are.



Photo by Jan Carty on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because we have an entire society based on distrust.



Photo by mauro mora on Unsplash

**Secret: stress is one of
the best predictors of
failure**

What happens when we are stressed

When we suffer from significant levels of stress, we enter survival mode.

We only do what we know very well how to do.

We become unable to consider alternatives and may end up doing the wrong thing.

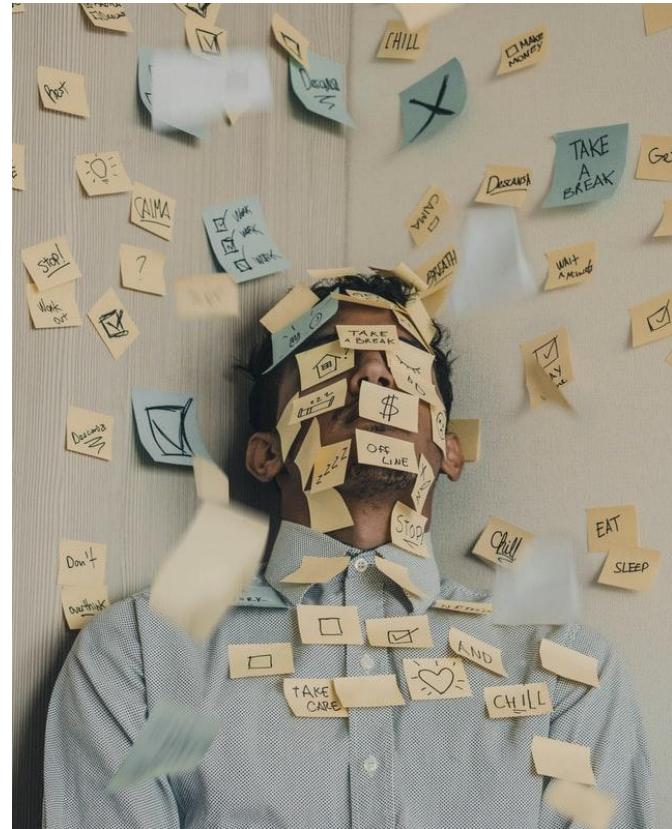


Photo by Luis Villasmil on Unsplash



We can't think clearly

When we are stressed, we can't think clearly and our ability to solve problems is reduced.



Photo by Albie Patacsil on Unsplash



Mindfulness courses everyone!

Let's just attend mindfulness courses and the problem is solved, isn't it?



Photo by Le Minh Phuong on Unsplash



High levels of stress are a management problem

If work is organised in such a way that it generates a lot of stress, it means that it's poorly organised.

We need to analyse the system to understand how it produces stress.



Photo by Chris Liverani on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because managers don't even think stress is a problem, or that it can affect results, or that it's possible to do something about it.



**Secret: to punish people
who bring bad news doesn't
make problems vanish**



Where messengers are shot

There are workplaces where you learn about problems only if you visit external forums and read anonymous comments.

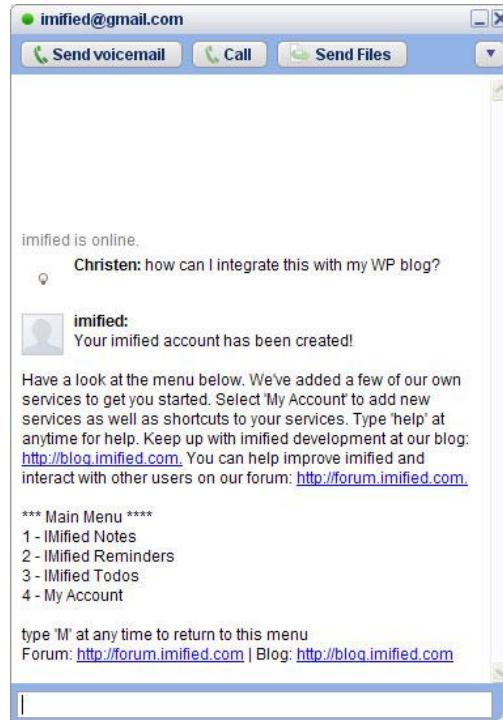


Photo by Christen Bouffard on Flickr

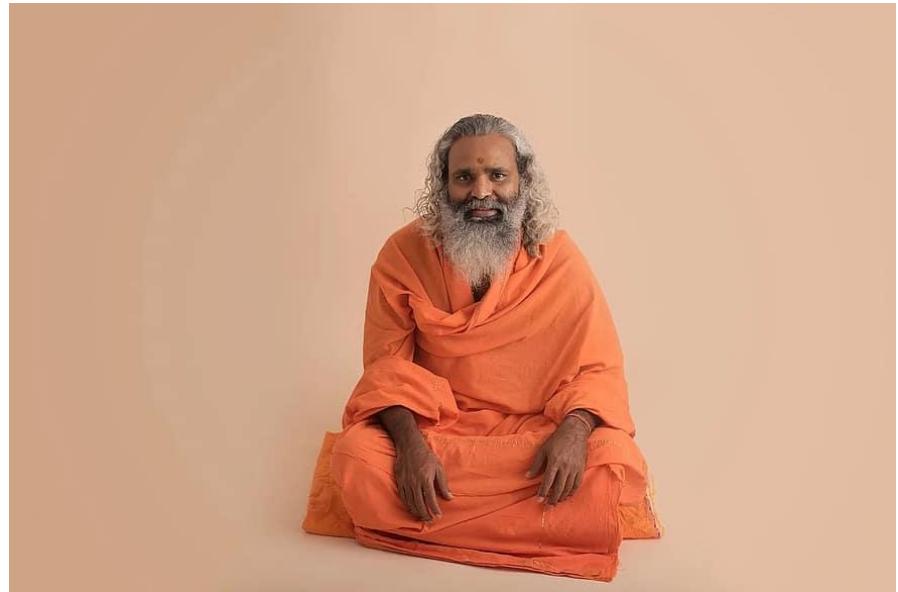


How messengers are shot

There are many ways. One is to hire “gurus” who teach employees methodologies supposed to be infallible.

The employee who sees that this is not the case, is told that she is not a “guru”.

She should learn about the methodologies if she wants to keep her job.





To threaten people is not going to solve any problem

Despite huge sums paid to hire the best “gurus”, methodologies often fail because they offer a one-size-fits-all solution that can be good for the specific problem only by accident.





Maybe, if we listened...

Maybe, if we listened to those employees who had concerns...

But, to listen, we need a profound cultural change based on trust and habits are hard to shake.



Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because in a lot of companies managers are busy shooting the messenger.



**Secret: you cannot
motivate people, you can
only demotivate them**



We are born to be free

We human beings are born to be free. You give us freedom and we grow up happy, smart, kind and eager to use our human powers in many positive ways.



Photo by Senjuti Kundu on Unsplash



Distrust poisons our minds

You restrict our freedom, poison our minds with distrust, and we live a life of quiet despair.



Photo by Matthew T Rader on Unsplash



Children would disassemble the planet

Children would disassemble the planet and rebuild it from scratch if given their way.





They bombard us with questions

They bombard us with questions because they want to know everything.





Their motivation is very strong

The question we should be asking ourselves is not "How can we motivate children?"

It's instead: "How do we manage to smother children's motivation so effectively?"





It's the same with workers

It's the same with workers. We press hard to suffocate their motivation.

What if we stop doing it?



Photo by Troy Spoelma on Unsplash



Why is this a secret?

It is one because schools and offices are still places where motivation goes to die.



Photo by kate.sade on Unsplash

**Secret: annual
performance reviews are
obsolete**

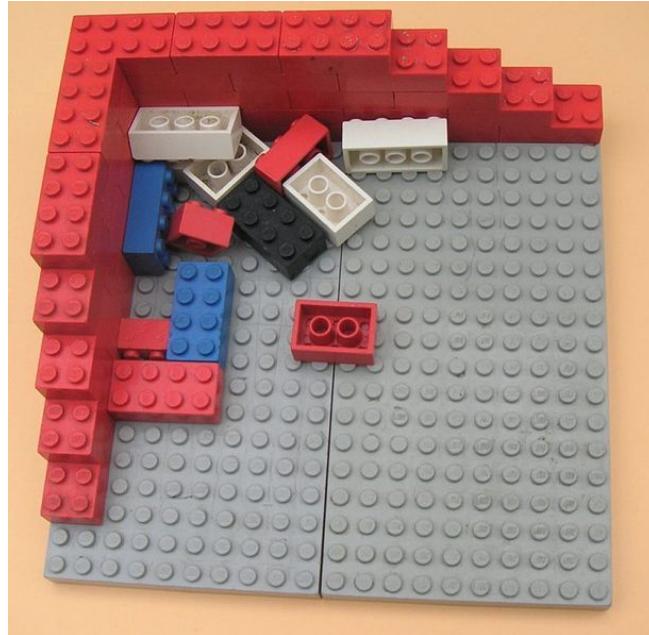


Systems deliver results, not individuals

In the 19th century, a new way to manage work was invented.

Tasks were split into subtasks and each of the latter was assigned to a worker.

The final result was the sum of the parts.

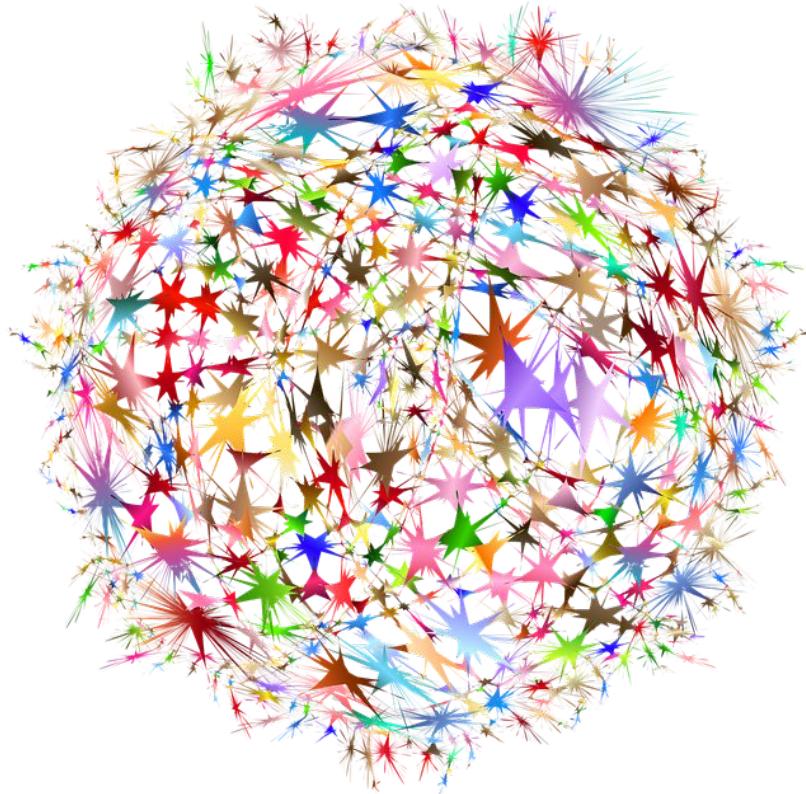




System thinking

In the 1950s, Edwards Deming discovered that this way to organise work was no longer effective.

We have to analyse the system in its entirety and we can't split it into parts.



Performance reviews are not about the system

It's a system that delivers results.

What's the point in talking with an employee about the performance a system produces?

If there is a performance problem, we have to study the system, not an individual.

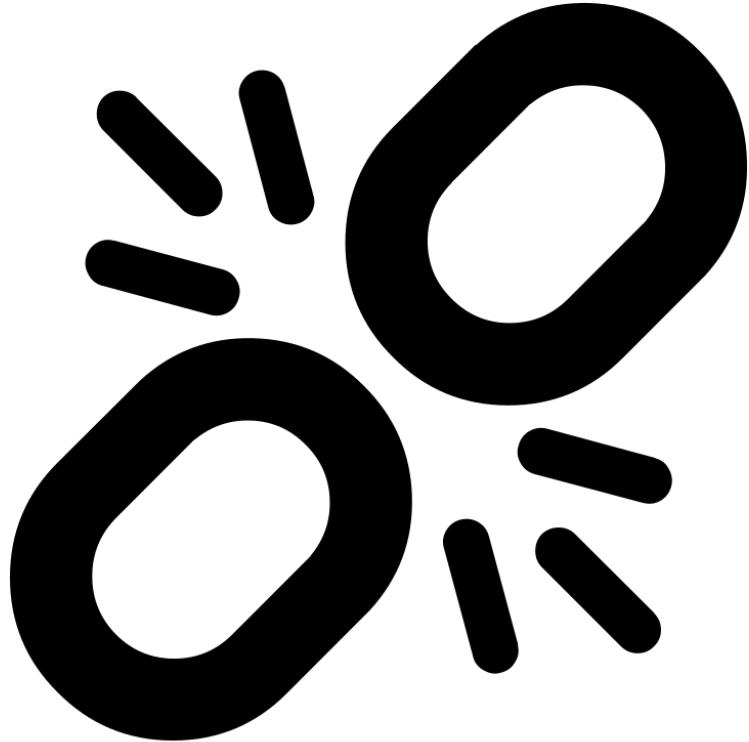


Photo by Anagha Dhomne on Wikimedia Commons



Employees know...

Employees know that performance reviews have nothing to do with performances.



unlink by Saeful Muslim from the Noun Project



Why is this a secret?

It is one because performance reviews are alive and well.



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Thanks for your attention!

Emanuele Santanche
Leadership coach for technology

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