

...with Ben (C) Fletcher

Head of the School of Psychology, University of Hertfordshire

One inspiration

Professor Karen Pine, who mapped out my head for this photo (and who I am married to).

One moment that changed the course of your career

An interview with Pat Rabbitt, in his rooms at Queen's College, Oxford University, for my DPhil. We discussed heart rate variability for an hour before realising we had different phenomena in mind. He accepted me for the doctorate.

One book all psychologists should read

A.E. Abbott's other-worldly story of *Flatland*.

One thing that you would change about psychologists

Psychology is a scientific discipline. Psychologists – of all people – should recognise when they are not being open-minded and dispassionate.

Many don't. They hide their prejudices behind their 'science'.



Professor Ben (C) Fletcher
b.fletcher@herts.ac.uk

One challenge you think psychology faces

How to rid the discipline of the evidence-biased cartels and to put an emphasis on

making a difference in the world rather than finding a difference in numbers.

To borrow from Marx: Hitherto, psychologists have sought to understand the world; the point, however, is to change it.

One regret

Failure to anticipate the difficulties that my middle name (C) would cause. It's my proper name, but even the passport office couldn't cope with it.

One powerful idea for change

Do Something Different. Don't carry on doing the same and expect a different outcome. Most do, and don't even realise.

One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

If you want to get on academically you have to plough a narrow furrow. A dear ex-colleague – Professor Dan Gowler at Sheffield – gave me that advice. I ignored him. However, I would also say – if you want to make a difference, get out into the world more.

One cultural recommendation

There is no better film than Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*

because it deals with what it is to be human.

One alternative career path you may have chosen

I could have chosen to focus purely on business and entrepreneurial activities. I have managed to do this alongside an academic career.

One hero/heroine from psychology past or present

Narrowness is often at the core of what it takes to be a 'great' psychologist. I admire psychologists who aren't afraid to try to make a difference in the world, even when it's met with disapproval from their peers.

One thing that 'organised psychology' could do better

Spend more time and energy looking for the good people and ideas instead of drawing on the usual circle. There's a lot of unrecognised talent out there.

One great thing that psychology has achieved

Convinced people that it has answers to practical problems.

One problem that psychology should deal with

Finding the real answers. Those that will make a difference to how people can live better lives.

One hope for the future of psychology

That it will come to see that the discipline is also itself a victim of the very processes it studies.

One proud moment

Creating communities of people who use Do Something Different and seeing lives really being transformed.

resource

'As a postgrad, getting my first paper published in *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* was significant, but now, 30 years on, it's fantastic to see my app on iTunes (Love Not Smoking: Do Something Different) – a sign of the times!'

coming soon

Articles on the psychology of holidays, why innocent people make false confessions, coaching your cortex and much more...

Send your comments about *The Psychologist* to the editor, Dr Jon Sutton, on jon.sutton@bps.org.uk, +44 116 252 9573 or to the Leicester office address

To advertise in *The Psychologist* or at www.psychapp.co.uk: giorgio.romano@redactive.co.uk, +44 (0)20 7880 7556

contribute

Think you can do better? Want to see your area of psychology represented more?

See the inside front cover for how you can contribute and reach 48,000 colleagues into the bargain, or just e-mail your suggestions to jon.sutton@bps.org.uk