

***Last week in the Big Apple. I had lunch on Wednesday*** with **Joan Kingsley** who is in from London with her husband **Philip** to spend the month of August in Quogue. This was a sort-of social visit, as we are old friends. We met doing Summer Stock together in Lake Placid in 1967. Joan is easy to befriend. She has one of those accessible personalities that people feel comfortable with almost immediately. She is an empathic character. She likes people and she's interested.

Our professional paths diverged. She met **Philip Kingsley** sometime after that and eventually moved to London where Philip has his headquarters in Mayfair. They have two daughters, **Kate** (Katherine Kingsley), an author; and **Annabel**, who has joined her father in his business. In the meantime Joan became a psychotherapist. I don't know much about her practice as I never ask a shrink about their patients/clients, but she did tell me that she has many professional men.

***The subject at lunch:*** Joan has co-authored a book with **Paul Brown** and **Sue Patterson** called "The Fear-Free Organization; Vital Insights from Neuroscience to Transform Your Business Culture." I've been hearing about it for more than a year, and now it is completed and published and she's out there publicizing it.

This didn't sound like a book that I'd pick up – a text-book about business organization lives, etc.? Honestly? No. Joan, understanding, told me specifically that she didn't expect me to read it; that she knew it wasn't my must-read. Frankly, I'd never given a conscious thought to life in an organization, business or otherwise.

***My only fulltime colleague is JH and we don't work in the*** same building and never have. So no one's around to annoy one. Needless to say, it's been a very successful collaboration. However, last night,



Joan and Philip Kingsley.

thinking about this day's Diary and writing about my lunch with Joan, I felt compelled and/or obligated to at least have a look at what's inside.

I started with Dr. Brown's preface. He is a professor of Organizational Neuroscience; Joan my friend, a psychotherapist, has long had an intense interest in the links between brain systems and our psychological lives; and Dr. Patterson is an oil and gas professional with more than 3 decades working in business development, leadership development, learning and recruiting.

***I learned in the first paragraph that this book is about*** neuroscience and its practical applications in one's life. I recently read **Oliver Sacks'** memoir "Moving Ahead." Dr. Sacks, an eminent neuroscientist, a researcher as well as an MD, introduced me to it in a way that I could vaguely grasp. I learned how it has everything to do with all of us, all of us in the animal kingdom -- on a moment to moment, day to day reality.



Joan Kingsley and her daughters, Kate and Annabel Kingsley.



DPC and Joan Kingsley at Michael's.

The name “neuroscience” is always intimidating to us non-scientifically inclined readers. There’s an easy chance you could wade in over your head. Yet the subject itself is so simple (yet complex) and in many ways so accessible to anyone’s understanding.

***So I kept reading. Here is a taste of it.*** The subject is our emotions and their relationship to our brains where they have evolved and developed.

“Socially we have come a long way from our distant social origins. But it’s still our biological origins that drive us. When we understand ... the *escape/avoidance* emotions are easier to trigger than the *attachment /growth* emotions, then we can easily see the single simple reason why organizations find it easier to run on *fear*.... the emotion easiest to trigger because it’s the one most closely connected with survival. It’s also the fastest route to burnout.”

“... We will see that is much more productive in an organization to trigger the attachment emotions of *excitement/joy* and the *trust/love* than it is to encourage any of the *fright/flight/fight* emotions, with *fear* being the most destructive.”

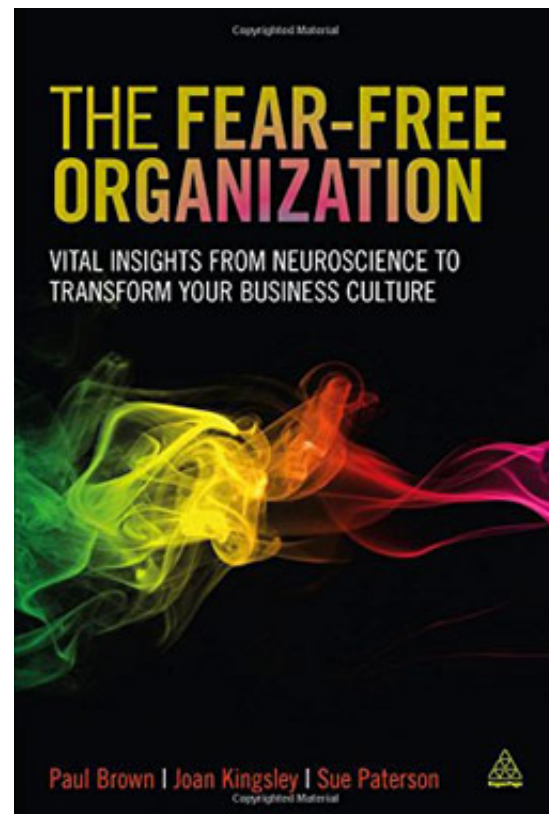
I plucked those quotes from the early pages because they may as well have been addressed to me personally. This book is about me. It’s about you too. It’s about everyone – not as parts of an organization but as individuals -- because it’s about the human brain and how We are It.

Then I read the introduction which began with this quote from **Maya Angelou**:

*“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”*

***Aha! The opening sentence after that*** quote is: “Fear is one of the most powerful motivating forces in our working culture today. It is what an overwhelming majority of bosses use, deliberately or mindlessly to keep order ...”

It goes on to declare that the first quarter of this new century will be defined by advancing in biology taking place, especially “the brain sciences, from which an understanding of the neurobiology of the ‘Self’ – an understanding of the way the brain construct the person – will come.”



[Click to order](#) "The Fear-free Organization: Vital Insights from Neuroscience to Transform Your Business Culture."

It's about us. You, me, him, her. It's about the *You* you know and what you don't know about You. It's an exploration you can't resist, because it's Yourself.

"The Fear-Free Organization; Vital Insights From Neuroscience to Transform Your Business Culture" is the title. From what I've read – and I'm nearly finished, I'd say the ideas therein might just transform your own mental culture just as well.