

# Psychopathic Leadership

Good, Bad, & Downright Ugly

Dorothy Spry



DOROTHY SPRY

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# PSYCHOPATHIC LEADERSHIP

GOOD, BAD, &  
DOWNRIGHT UGLY

Psychopathic Leadership: Good, Bad, & Downright Ugly

1<sup>st</sup> edition

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ISBN 978-87-403-2300-9

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# PREFACE



**Image No 1** Dorothy Ann Spry

True North Leaders (TNL), is a psychological insights consultancy consisting of a team of Organisational, Health and Consumer Psychologists. Founder and Managing Director, Dorothy Ann Spry, MSc Psych, is an Organisational Psychologist, and author of numerous business management books and research articles on topics ranging from: Psychometric Testing; Emotional Intelligence; Authentic Leadership, Anger Management and Coaching.

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- Certification, and or Licensing to use the online organisational climate and behaviour surveys and questionnaires.

Email: [dorothy@truenorthleaders.co.uk](mailto:dorothy@truenorthleaders.co.uk)

Website: [www.truenorthleaders.co.uk](http://www.truenorthleaders.co.uk)

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The very word ‘psychopath’ may conjure up images of cold hearted serial killers such as Ted Buddy, or Ian Brady and Myra Hindley: also known as the “Moors Murderers”. However, although psychopathic serial killers and psychopathic leaders share the same personality disorder, not all psychopaths have murderous intentions in mind, this is not to say that they are not just as dangerous and can leave just as much criminality and destruction in their wake, whilst getting their kicks by other means. A prime example of this would be the global financial crisis of 2007, in which toxic and psychopathic leadership behaviours ran rampant. Motivated in the main by ruthless greed, high risk taking and a strong sense of entitlement, without the slightest hint of remorse or accountability for their part in the meltdown.

This breed of psychopath, referred to as a ‘Corporate or Workplace Psychopath’ manages to: charm, lie and manipulate their way into senior level positions in the pursuit of:

- ✓ **MONEY**
- ✓ **POWER**
- ✓ **CONTROL**
- ✓ **STATUS**

*“the credit crunch has seen a “mass outbreak of corporate psychopathy which resulted in something that nearly crashed the world economy”.*

– Psychologist, Oliver James

## 1.2 OVERVIEW OF THIS E-BOOK

This e-book contributes to the literature regarding the growing number of “white collar psychopaths” present within organisations today, by outlining what the differences are in the “psychological make-up” between a good, bad and downright ugly psychopathic leader, and why, when either recruiting, promoting or developing a leader organisational decision makers still seem to choose authoritarian, controlling, narcissistic, and downright ugly psychopaths to bring in the company profits and manage its employees. When in fact the evidence contradicts this notion, and is bolstered by research studies that it is the “authentic and empathic leader” what I would term as “good and a productive psychopath” who is the most successful at bringing in both company profits whilst at the same time maintaining the mental health and well-being of its employees, and furthermore keeping the organisations integrity and brand image status intact.

## 2 WHAT IS PSYCHOPATHIC LEADERSHIP?

### 2.1 CHECKLIST

I am sure that more than once in your lifetime you have come across a boss who displays certain psychopathic behaviours in one form or another.

Have a look at the following checklist (table one) of descriptors and think of someone you know who may display some, or even all of the following traits – perhaps your boss, work colleague or team leader?

<b>Psychopathic Traits</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
EGOTISTICAL	An inflated sense of themselves and their abilities?
GRANDIOSITY	Feel they have a huge sense of entitlement above all others?
SUPERFICIAL	Overly friendly upon first meeting them, they tend to ask more questions about you without disclosing anything about themselves?
PERNOKUO	Shameless liars mixing truths with untruths it is difficult to know what is real, and what is not real?
BLAME GAME	Does not accept any blame whatsoever for their own mistakes?
NARCISSITIC	It's all about them?
GAME PLAYER	Playing people off against one another?
MANIPULATIVE	Causes you to doubt yourself and to question or even blame yourself?
CUNNING	Taking credit for your, or other people's work?
THRILL SEEKER	Enjoys taking risks and may have quite a few sexual partners outside of other relationships?
LACKS EMPATHY	Bullying mentality – unmoved by others suffering.

**Table One**

*"if you're beginning to feel worried that you may be a psychopath,  
if you recognise some of those traits in yourself,  
if you're feeling a creeping anxiety about it – that means you are not one."*

– Jon Ronson, *the Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry*

## 2.2 MASK OF SANITY

Dr Hervey Cleckley an American psychiatrist and pioneer in the field of psychopathy, provided us with the most influential cluster of the clinical descriptors of psychopathy in his book, "The Mask of Sanity", (1941 & revised additions) which was later made into a film "The Three Faces of Eve" (1957).

The term "Mask of Sanity" is derived from Dr Cleckley's belief that a psychopath can appear normal, and even likable, but that the "mask" conceals a dark side in the form of a personality disorder.

Dr Hervey Cleckley's work and descriptors preceded the publication of an important book called: *Snakes in Suits: When Psychopaths Go to Work* (2007), in which a new breed of psychopath was unveiled – The Corporate or Workplace Psychopath. The authors Dr's Paul Babiak and Robert Hare, have both played a significant role in highlighting the disturbing similarities found regarding the clustering of personality traits displayed by that of serial killers, with that of leaders working in both public and private organisations today.

At interviews, they appear to recruiters to be 'a good fit' for the organisation. Suited and booted, with a highly confident spiel as they churn out their past achievements and what added value they can bring should they be employed. In fact, they come across as both intelligent and emotionally intelligent as they play their next big role to their target audience. However, once they have gained entry to the organisation, and gradually, the wolf's mask disguised in sheep's clothing starts to drop, as they begin the process of targeting the employees who will be the most useful to them, whilst bullying, humiliating and disregarding those who hold little value to their own selfish agenda.



**Image No 2** Wolf in Sheeps Clothing

Source: lifehack.org

### **2.3 PSYCHOPATHIC LEADERSHIP IN THE MOVIES**

Hollywood has certainly provided us with plenty of examples of “White Collar” psychopathic leadership. For example in the movie, *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2014), with Leonardo DiCaprio portraying the real life story of boiler room trader Jordan Belfont, who pleaded guilty to stock market manipulation. However, it was the 1980s iconic movie ‘*Wall Street*’ in which Michael Douglas (pictured) played the role of Gordon Gekko who certainly hits the jackpot in portraying a “White Collar” con artist and corporate psychopath to a tee.

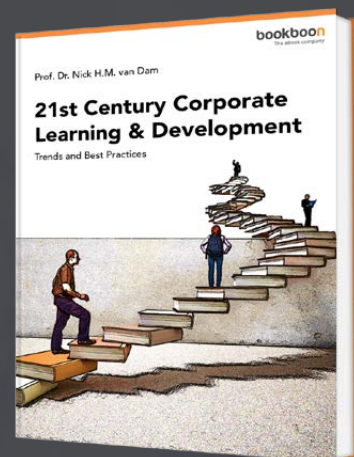


**IMAGE No 3** – Gordon Gekko played by Michael Douglas

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**THE POINT IS LADIES AND GENTLEMAN:-**

**"GREED, FOR LACK OF A BETTER WORD"**

**"GREED IS RIGHT"**

**"GREED WORKS"**

**"GREED CLARIFIES"**

**"GREED CUTS THROUGH AND CAPTURES THE  
ESSENCE OF THE EVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT"**

**"GREED IN ALL OF IT FORMS BRINGS LIFE"**

– (Gordon Gekko's, Motivational Speech to other high flying bankers. 11th Dec 1987)

*One in five corporate executives are psychopaths –  
roughly the same rate as among prisoners*

– Nathan Brooks, Psychologist (2016)

## **2.4 PSYCHOPATHIC LEADERSHIP DESCRIPTOR**

Psychopathic Leadership relates to someone who appears to be intelligent, sincere and charming. However, remove the mask of normality and what is revealed is an emotionally corrupted, ruthless, callous, bullying and immoral individual with a personality disorder.

# 3 PSYCHOPATHS CAREER CHOICES

## 3.1 MOST AND LEAST POPULAR CAREER CHOICES

White collar psychopaths are not just confined to the financial sector, indeed when it comes to choosing a career that offers them Money, Power, Control and Status, then the industries listed in the left hand column (table two) fits the bill nicely. Whether it involves applying their silver tongued, but arrogant, callous, ruthless and manipulative demeanor as a CEO, a Lawyer or as a Politician, they tend to gravitate towards careers that will not involve the dreaded word **FEELINGS**. The *least* popular career choices for psychopaths are displayed in the right hand column of table 2, which requires an individual to have a high level of nurturing and caring for others and their community.

	<b>MOST POPULAR</b> <i>Divorced from Feelings CLINICAL</i>	<b>LEAST POPULAR</b> <i>Human element involved FEELINGS</i>
1	CEO	Support Worker
2	Lawyer/Politician/Banking	Nurse
3	Media/TV/Radio	Therapist
4	Salesperson	Charity Worker
7	Police Officer/Military	Teacher

**Table Two**

*There is no denying the fact that certain careers would not be able to function properly if leaders did not have the mental capacity to be able to turn their psychopathic traits up a notch and become more assertive, more ruthless, and more cunning and to puff up their egos. Indeed, we all have psychopathic traits, it just all depends on how we harness them, and whether the cluster of psychopathic traits are mixed appropriately to be either of the good, bad or downright ugly variety.*

## 4 THE DARK TRIAD

### 4.1 THE DARK TRIAD

A large majority of the population think, that you are either a psychopath, or you are not, and that it is all very black and white. However, there is evidence to suggest that it is not as clear-cut as this. *In fact, psychopathy, like height and weight, for example, lies along a spectrum* (Kevin Dutton, 2015) and a good way to demonstrate this, is by introducing you to what is commonly referred to as: *The Dark Triad of Personality Disorders* including: *Narcissism, Machiavellianism* and *Psychopathy* which are all prevalent in the workplace in one form or another.

### 4.2 NARCISSISM

The term Narcissism lies in Greek mythology when Narcissus a young hunter who was known for his vanity fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. He was so captivated by his image that he could not bear to tear himself away from the pool and starved to death.



**Image No 4:** Narcissus

Source: Pin interest

Individuals who have Narcissistic tendencies tend to have the following characteristics in common:

***They love to be:-***

- Admired
- The center of attention
- Having their egos stroked

***Feelings of grandiosity*** – the belief that they are better than any old *cog in the wheel* and that they are special.

***It is all about me!*** – Because of this pre-occupation with themselves, they make very poor listeners and have great difficulty forming close relationships with others.

***Some people see things as they are and ask why; narcissists see things that never were and ask why not. Narcissistic leaders are after something more. They want – and need – to leave behind a legacy.***

– George Bernard Shaw

### 4.3 PRODUCTIVE NARCISSISTS

There is nothing particularly concerning about an individual having a *healthy dose* of Narcissism, indeed there are many CEO's, Entrepreneurs and Politicians who have what is termed "productive narcissistic traits" and make for excellent Visionaries and Innovators for future generations to come: Bill Gates (microsoft), Richard Branson (virgin group) and Winston Churchill (past UK prime minister) to name a few.

### 4.4 HIGH DOSE NARCISSISTS

High dose narcissists, unlike the productive narcissist, can become a challenge to any organisation, an example would be Steve Jobs, although he started off as an extremely well talked about Innovator for his part in the development of Apple computers, it was only upon his death that stories came out of how he berated his staff in front of other employees.

*If the Narcissists dosage is becoming too high and the individual has a reasonable level of self-awareness, then a trusted colleague whom they respect and trust, may be able to assist in putting*

*then back onto the right track again. If this does not work, then a coaching intervention is recommended to establish whether the individual can in fact be coached, or there is something far deeper going on such as: Narcissistic Personality Disorder.*

***“Though they are quick to put others down, unhealthy narcissists view themselves in absolutely positive terms.”***

**– Daniel Goleman – Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace (1995)**

## **4.5 NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER**

Narcissists with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) possess a borderline personality disorder, in that they have an unhealthy and distorted view of the world around them. Behind the mask of this extreme version of grandiosity, dreamer mentality and ultra-confidence, with absolutely no substance, is an extremely fragile self-esteem which if it takes a knock they will be sure to retaliate.

## **4.6 CASE STUDY**

Psychologist and Executive Coach Steve Berglas, (Harvard Business Review), writes to heighten the awareness of the difference between what is termed as a *“problem executive”* who may have a high dose of Narcissism, with that of an *“executive with a problem”* who can best be identified by a psychologist who has the appropriate psychological training of how to spot dysfunctional behaviours beyond a performance issue. He was asked to take on a client, who had previously been working with another executive coach who had only served to shield him from any pain and enhance his sense of grandiosity, as reflected in the feeling:

**“I’m so important that the boss paid for a special coach to help me.”**

No amount of executive coaching could have alleviated his client’s narcissistic personality disorder, if anything, it only helped further erode his performance, as often occurs when narcissists avoid the truth and believe that they are always right.

## 4.7 MACHIAVELLIANISM



Image No 5 Machievelli

Source: ru.wikipedia.org

*“The end justifies the means”*

Machiavellianism is named after the philosophy of Nicolo Machiavelli (pictured) and the subsequent book “*The Prince*” (1532). According to Machiavelli, *honesty, along with all other moral virtues are seen to be disposable*, and he would argue that, people in positions of power should choose to be, well, Machiavellian, even if that is not their natural leadership style.

- People who score highly on Machiavellianism tend to be *Un-emotional* employing *Cunning & Duplicity* in how they go about their work and day to day interactions with others.
- Their belief is that *interpersonal manipulation* and the *exploitation* of others is the key for life’s success, and behave accordingly.

*Whilst Machiavellians may be adept at influencing and persuading others, they are also very clever at manipulating and disrupting teams by spreading untruths about them to key people.*

## 4.8 MACHIAVELLIANISM – WHY! I CAN SMILE!!



**Image No 6:** Lawrence Olivier-Richard-iii  
Source: Shakespeare Blog

*Why! I can smile  
And murder whilst I smile  
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears  
And frame my face to all occasions  
I will drown more sailors than the mermaids shall  
I shall play the orator as well as Nestor  
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could  
And like a Synon take another Troy  
I can add colours to the chameleon  
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages  
And set the murderous Machiavelli' to school  
Can I do this and cannot get a crown?  
Tut! Were it further off I would pluck it down*

*– Richard, Duke of Gloucester – eloquently played by Sir Lawrence Oliver (pictured)*

### 4.9 PSYCHOPATHY – DARK TRIAD OVERLAP

The third arm of the dark triad is Psychopathy, by far the most callous and malicious of them all. However, research conducted by Paulus 2002, Jones & Paulus, 2014, shows there is a clear overlap between the three dark triad traits in terms of how they *struggle with emotional content, lack empathy* and have a *highly manipulative interpersonal communication style*.

The distinction between the three dark traits illustrated in table three: shows this individual’s score is elevated 49/60 for Narcissism with 31/60 for Machiavellianism, and a low score of 15/60 for Psychopathy, this spread of scores would indicate that the individual is displaying grandiose and annoying traits, but it by no means makes him/her a “fully-fledged” downright ugly psychopath. Whereas in table four, all of the dark triad scores fall at the *extreme end* of the spectrum meaning, that this individual is a downright ugly psychopath with callous and malicious intent in mind. More on this in chapter 7, “Undress the Sheep to find the Wolf”.

Dark Triad Scores	Low Mid-range Extreme
Narcissism	49 (elevated)
Machiavellianism	31 (mid-range)
Psychopathy	15 (low)

**Table Three** Scores out of 60 per grid

Dark Triad Scores	Scores out of 60 per grid
Narcissism	55 (high)
Machiavellianism	57 (high)
Psychopathy	59 (high)

**Table Four**

*Psychopathic traits are like the dials on a studio mixing desk, that you can turn up and down in different situations – if they’re all turned up to maximum, then you’re a very dysfunctional psychopath.*

– Kevin Dutton, Psychologist

# 5 PSYCHOPATHIC LEADERSHIP – GOOD, BAD & DOWNRIGHT UGLY

## 5.1 GOOD PSYCHOPATHIC LEADERSHIP

### - The Productive Psychopath

The Productive Psychopath is an asset to any organisation, in that they are able to perform their job successfully and, when under great stress, by managing their psychopathic traits in a manner that is appropriate for the set of circumstances they are dealing with. For example, Professor Kevin Dutton and Andy McNabb an ex SAS officer, and joint authors of the Book – *The Good Psychopaths Guide to Success* (2015), describe how Andy under psychological assessment was revealed as being a diagnosed psychopath. The difference being between Andy and that of a dysfunctional and destructive psychopath, is that Andy has the capability to be able to switch his psychopathic dials *UP*, or to switch the psychopathic dials *DOWN* and, therefore manage his psychopathic traits in order to get the very best out of himself and others.



**Image No 7** Source: Drew Patrick Miller on Unsplash

## 5.2 HOW CAN THIS BE?

It was found that Andy did have *some empathy* which served as a buffer for not making him a completely coldhearted and callous individual, but enabled him to be ruthless in the appropriate context of his job, therefore using his psychopathic traits in a productive and not downright ugly and destructive manner.

*You don't want to be a Gordon Gekko character, screwing people over all the time. They get hurt once, but you get hurt forever, because they'll never trust you again. That's the difference knowing when to turn that notch up and having the emotional capacity to know when to kill it.*

– Andy McNabb (2016)

### 5.3 BAD PSYCHOPATHIC TRAITS – POWER HAS GONE TO THEIR HEADS

I am sure you have heard the saying? *POWER HAS GONE TO THEIR HEADS*

This could be an individual you know who has recently been promoted to a senior level position and suddenly the humble person you once knew, and liked, and thought they liked you, has morphed into a grandiose figure distancing themselves from their colleagues who they now see as beneath them by adopting an 'I am better than you persona'.



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To be clear, individuals who I would describe as having ‘*Bad Psychopathic traits*’ would certainly have some Empathy bobbing about in the emotional banking quarter of the brain, however those empathy levels can be altered from within the brain dramatically when an individual has been given some power, with recent research (psychological science journal, 2017), finding that having power tends to dampens down empathy levels. Furthermore, Hogeveen J (2014), and his colleagues found that having power changes how the brain responds to others around them, in that individuals were found to be less empathic, the more power they acquired.

*Appropriate assessment, training or coaching interventions for newly promoted individuals would act to press the reset button, before the dark side takes hold and their empathy levels become even more depleted.*

**Power is the Great Aphrodisiac.**

– Henry Kissinger

#### 5.4 DOWNRIGHT UGLY PSYCHOPATHIC LEADERSHIP

Downright Ugly Psychopathic Leaders, in the initial stages of hiring them, do help to increase an organisations profit margins, it is a win-win situation. However, because they are impulsive, risk takers and thrill seekers with a callous disregard for anyone else but *number one*, once the mask of sanity drops and the real self is divulged, it then becomes a question of “*what*” the long term costs are going to be at Individual or Organisational level, or both. The research presented in table five, was conducted by Professor Clive Boddy, Head of Leadership and Organisational Behavior at Middlesex University.

FOR THE INDIVIDUAL	FOR THE ORGANISATION
Good employers leaving	Legal liabilities
Low job motivation and satisfaction	Organisational Integrity/Brand image damaged
Conflicts, yelling, rudeness	Organisation seen as uncaring
Stress related illnesses	Shareholders/Investors left in the dark
High rates of absenteeism	Bail Outs
Empty pension pots	Lack of Corporate & Social responsibility alignment

**Table Five**

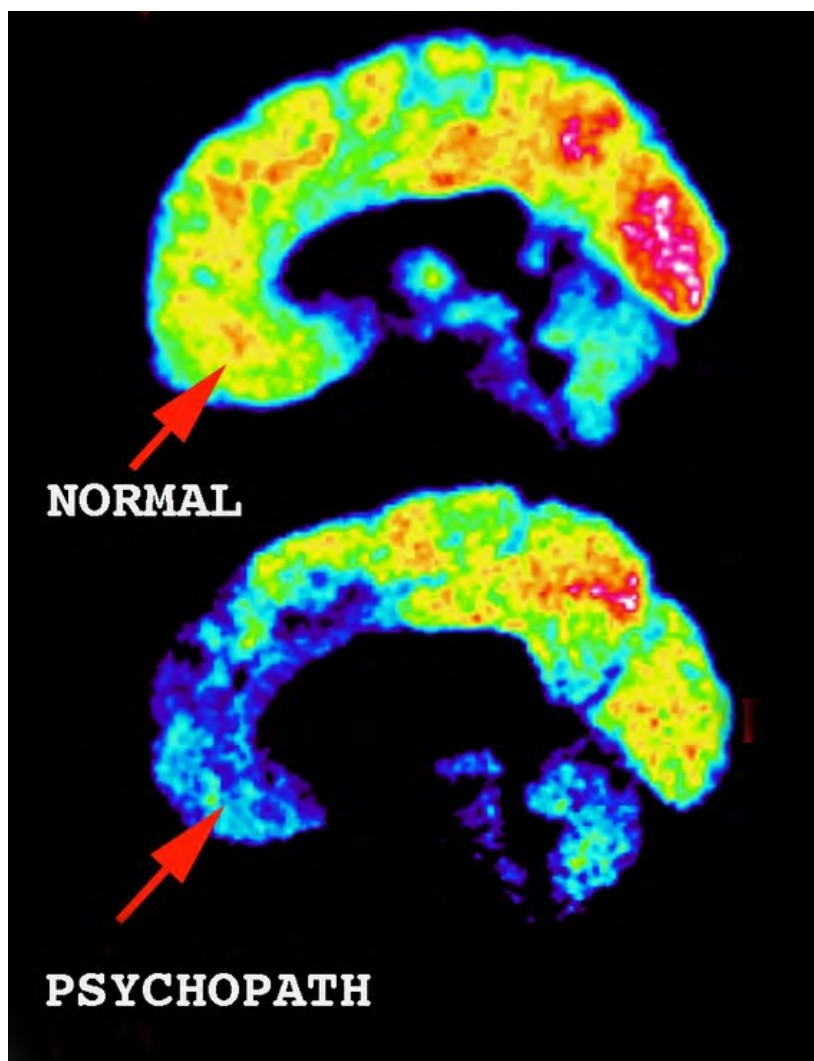
Source: Dr Clive Boddy: Corporate Psychopaths, Organisational Destroyers (2014).

## 5.5 BULLYING AT WORK

Research studies have also found high correlations between bullying and psychopathy within organisational settings, Boddy 2011, 2014; Malovany 2014, with 29 per cent of high scoring psychopaths enjoying the callousness of humiliating and victimising others, leading to vulnerable employees who may be afraid to say anything for fear of being seen as a whistle blower, dismissed from their jobs, or facing retaliation.

## 5.6 BRAIN ACTIVITY

If you take a look at the brain scan (pictured), you will see that for the non-psychopath's brain (normal), there is clear brain activity occurring demonstrated by the brightly lit colours of yellow, red, green and turquoise. In comparison, take a look at an image of the psychopath's brain activity highlighted with specks of dark and light cool blues.



**IMAGE No 8** Brain scan of a Psychopath compared to a Non Psychopath

Source: Quora brain scans

Numerous research studies have been conducted into the psychopathic brain, Fallon (2013), (Weber & colleagues. (2008); Anderson and Kiehl 2012; Blair (2008) with the amygdala region being one of the focal areas of concern. The amygdala is part of the brain which plays a crucial role in regulating our emotions and its emotional content. For example: *empathy levels, impulses* and *risk taking behaviours*. It is also the part of the brain which is responsible for *informing* and *regulating our moral compass*. If the brain activity is dysfunctional and a destructive personality disorder is at play, then letting a downright ugly psychopath lose into an organisation can prove disastrous for all concerned as demonstrated in 5.4 and 5.5.

### 5.7 CASE STUDY

The following case study involved a UK Charity (Boddy 2015), and set out to examine the comparisons between two CEO’s who had performed the same job, within the same organisation, but who had very different styles of leadership. Interviews were conducted with employees who had experienced both styles of leadership.

The first CEO, who had since left the company and who displayed an authentic and empathic leadership style was described by those interviewed as a being well-respected and trusted with an open door policy, only to be replaced by a psychopathic CEO, whose leadership style was considerably different as he chose to sit in an open-plan office even when he was discussing sensitive and confidential issues, or berating staff members. Any voices raised against the views of the psychopathic CEO were reportedly not tolerated.

Table six reports significantly different leadership styles and the consequences of those styles.

EMPATHIC CEO	PSYCHOPATHIC CEO
Values in line with the company’s mission.	Lost contracts/Lost clients,
Employees felt empowered and given a voice to express their opinion.	86% of employees leaving the company within 2 years of the new CEO appointment and replacements also leaving at a fast pace after that.
No bullying was reported.	Belittled and bullied weak/vulnerable employees
Teams worked under a supportive climate.	Staff absenteeism sky rocketed
Open communication and in a good and profitable direction.	Leaderless CEO/lost profits

**Table Six**

# 6 SCREENING FOR PSYCHOPATHIC TRAITS

## 6.1 SCREENING FOR PSYCHOPATHIC TRAITS

It would be reasonable to think, that if business leaders are to be trusted with the company coffers, then it would also be logical to conclude that stringent screening procedures to weed out dysfunctional and downright ugly psychopathic leaders should be tightened up. Currently, recruitment and selection professionals may be basing their decisions on outdated leadership profiles that do not take into account an in-depth approach to the true nature of the potential leader who can quite easily con, lie, manipulate and act their way into a senior executive position.

In the left hand column of table seven, there is a list of the characteristics and skills that would certainly fit the profile for leadership capabilities – a candidate who ticks all of these boxes would certainly be considered for short-listing. However, in the right-hand column, the descriptions of the potential leadership characteristics and skills have been interpreted using a ‘behavioural-psychology insights’ approach into the dark side of an individual, in which the qualities no longer seem so desirable!

<b>What they display to the world The ‘Bright Side’</b>	<b>Hidden implicit characteristics The ‘Dark Side’</b>
Charismatic	Superficial
Self-confidence	Arrogance or Grandiosity
Ability to influence	Manipulative
Persuasive	Con-artist
Visionary thinking	A concoction of truths and half truths
Ability to take risks	Impulsiveness
Action orientated	Thrill seeking
Ability to make tough decisions	Lack of empathy for others

**Table Seven**

*“The very qualities often mistaken for leadership are the very ones that as the months pass, and if left un-monitored damage businesses. These people remorselessly manipulate, charm, lie and bully their way into favour, often creating highly successful careers for themselves while leaving a wake of destruction and broken spirits in their path.”*

– Boddy, C.R., (2011); *Corporate Psychopaths: Organisational Destroyers*

*“Not all psychopaths are in prison. Some are in the Boardroom.”*

– *Dr Robert Hare (2002)*

## 6.2 SUCCESSFUL PSYCHOPATHS

The term “Successful Psychopath” has been used to describe an individual who has managed to deceive, charm and manipulate their way into an organisation. As a new employee they can be difficult to spot, because like most new recruits they are putting on their best front.

Similarly, individuals with a personality disorder who climb the ladder of an organisation via a succession planning or a promotional route are extremely adept at appearing normal, in fact, even likable to those of influence. Therefore, it is not surprising they slip through the net, because they show one face to those individuals of power and influence, and another face to those individuals who are not a valuable asset to their end goal of: Money, Power, Control and Status.

## 6.3 PSYCHOPATHIC ORGANISATIONS

When an organisation recruits a psychopathic leader, they are initiating the first steps towards breeding a psychopathic organisation, and this may help to explain why many organisations become rife with bullying behaviors,. Research conducted by Dr’s Paul Babiak, Robert Hare and colleagues (2010), found that individuals who scored highly on a measure of psychopathy held senior management positions, or had been identified through succession planning as having high potential, even though there was a strong relationship between psychopathy and poor management style.

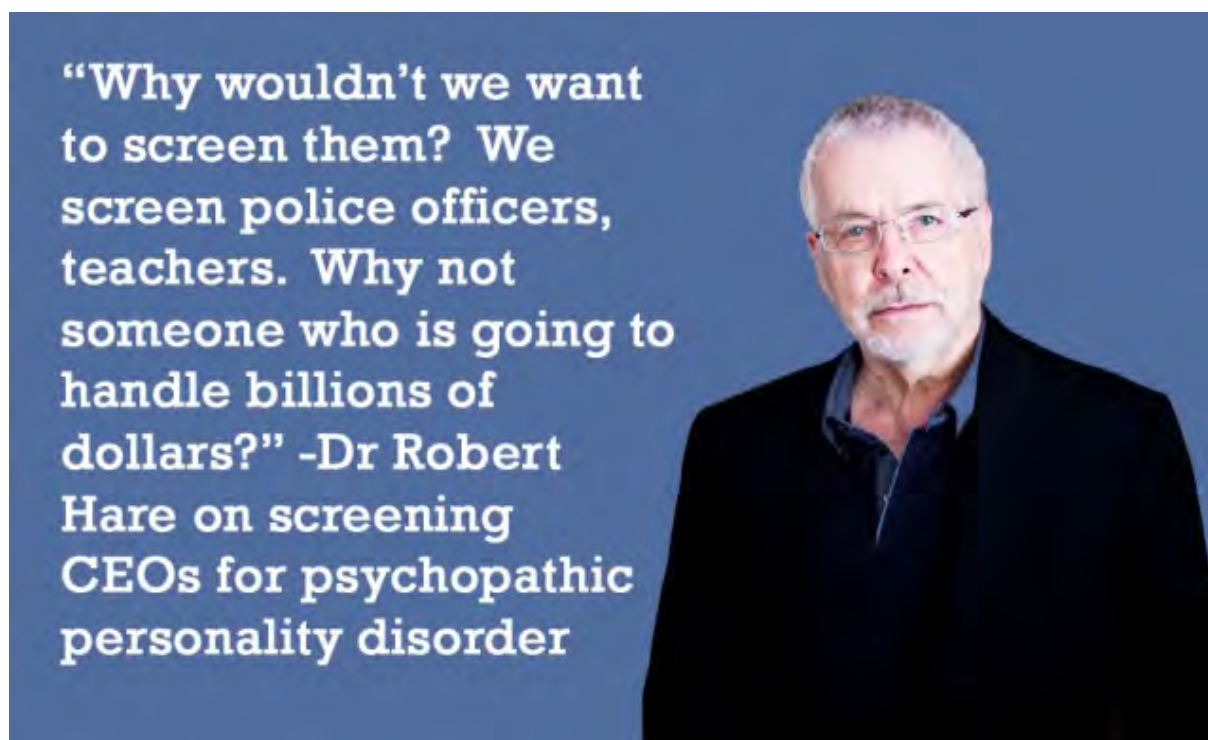
*All it takes is a psychopath or two at or near the top of the management chain to establish an organizational culture of ruthlessness and abuse. Thus, the behavior is modeled, and the rest of us pay the price. We urge organisations to distinguish between psychopathic behaviors at work and individual diagnoses of psychopathy.*

– Drs. Gary and Ruth Namie – Workplace Bullying Institute

## 6.4 CHECKLIST

Good and productive psychopathic leaders will be able to backup their success stories with verifiable facts, so one of the first positive steps towards identifying dysfunctional behavior and protecting the organisation and its employees from a crisis would be to:

- Verify all information contained in the CV
- Conduct both criminal and reference checks
- Obtain work samples
- Provide adequate psychological training to employees to help spot and report dysfunctional behaviours
- Set a probation period of six to twelve months
- Conduct an organisational climate survey or 360 appraisal



**Image No 9** Dr Robert Hare author of Snakes in Suits – When Psychopaths go to Work

## 7 UNDRESS THE SHEEP TO FIND THE WOLF



Image No 10

Source: Church and State Org

### 7.1 UNDRESS THE SHEEP TO FIND THE WOLF

One of the most critical indicating factors in spotting callous and dysfunctional psychopathic behavior, is seen firstly in how they treat their peers and other employees.

a) Is there *consistency* in how the individual behaves towards others?

Or,

b) Is there *incongruence* in their behavior, resulting in public humiliations, bullying and verbal abuse, to more vulnerable employees, and yet total sweetness and light shown towards others who are seen by the psychopath as being more influential and therefore important to their own agenda?

Observational research conducted by Dr's Paul Babiak and Robert Hare (2007), have found that once they have gained employment within an organisation there is a common pattern

of behaviors which dysfunctional psychopathic personalities use when weighing up their potential victims:

Step 1 – Assessment

Step 2 – *Manipulation*

Step 3 – *Abandonment*

#### **At the assessment phase they will:-**

- Assess for any *tensions* between rival work colleagues, team leaders or managers in order that further on down the line they can spread *lies* and *friction* about them to higher ranking individuals within the organisation.
- Assess who their *talented*, but *naïve* peers are in order that they can *steal* their work and ideas to pass off as their own.
- Assess what work colleagues or potential rival's *weaknesses* and *hot buttons* are and how they can make use of this knowledge during the manipulation phase.
- Assess how they can bond with you, if you hold any power or influence that is.

## **7.2 PATRONS AND PAWNS**

Once the assessment phase is complete, and in preparation to start sowing the seeds of alliances, each of the psychopaths selected victims are placed into either a *Patrons* or a *Pawns* “pot”

**Patrons:** would be described as the *protectors* and *defenders* of the psychopath – they are *high value* individuals because they hold “formal power and influence”. Their goal is to build rapport with a Patron in order to secure themselves against future complaints about their behavior.

**Pawns:** would be described as PA's or secretaries who hold *informal influence* and can gain access to the important people further up the food chain, and who are charmed and manipulated into using what power they may have – for the psychopaths gain, and not theirs.

## 7.3 THE PUPPETS AND THE PUPPETEER

### Step 2: Manipulation



Image No 11

Source: Love Fraud

Step two is the manipulation phase where the psychopath's mastery of manipulation and puppeteering begins the process of “cosying” up to their selected patrons and pawns, and bonding with each and every person ‘one-on-one’, specifically designed to *work* for his or her selected victim.

Drs. Robert Hare and Paul Babiak (2007) in their book “Snakes in Suits” When Psychopaths go to Work (2007), highlight *four messages* which the psychopath communicates to their intended victim's i.e. Patron or Pawns.

#### Messages like:

1. *I like who you are*
2. *I am just like you*
3. *Your secrets are safe with me*
4. *I am the perfect friend for you.*

However, whilst these messages are what they wish their victim to hear, does not really exist, it is just a convenient and superficial fabrication of words they use in order to entrap their

intended targets into feeling they have a friend and supporter by their side. A proportion of narcissistic psychopathic individuals may fall at the first post by laying on the charm too thickly, therefore coming across as their true selves which is glib, superficial and not at all convincing in their words at all.

## 7.4 ABANDONMENT – STEP 3

The abandonment phase occurs when the psychopath decides that their victim, is no longer useful to them, and therefore moves onto another target. If any complaints are made about the psychopath's behaviour, they are able to avoid any confrontation by relying on their highly placed supporters whom they had cosied up to during the manipulation phase. Loyal to no one within the organisation, eventually the high ranking patron who had supported them is also betrayed and shoved aside, and the psychopath moves into his/her new office.

*Once a psychopath decides that an individual is no longer useful to them they move on very quickly, and don't expect a heartfelt explanation, as they just do not do feelings, so do not be too upset by their sudden departure.*

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## 7.5 PSYCHOPATHY CHECK LIST

The Psychopathy Check List (PCL) was originally developed by Dr Robert Hare in the 1970s and is designed for use by clinical and forensic psychologists to conduct behavioural interviews within the prison population. It is described as the gold standard in recognising downright ugly psychopaths. The descriptors, listed below, would also serve as a useful guide for white collar psychopathic behaviours within the workplace.

The PCL, is scored by awarding 2 points to each item with 28 points or higher out of 40 points required. For starters: *Lack of remorse or guilt* and *Callousness and lack of empathy* being most certainly red flags of psychopathy.

	<b>PCL Descriptor</b>	<b>TICK or CROSS</b>			<b>TICK or CROSS</b>
1	Glib and superficial charm		11	Sexual promiscuity	
2	Grandiose estimation of self		12	Many short term marital relationships	
3	Need for constant stimulation		13	Lack of realistic long term goals	
4	Pathological Lying		14	Irresponsibility	
5	Cunning and Manipulative		15	Impulsiveness	
6	Lack of remorse or guilt		16	Failure to accept responsibility for own actions	
7	Shallow superficial responses		17	Criminal versatility	
8	Callousness and lack of empathy		18	Early behavioural problems	
9	Parasitic lifestyle		19	Juvenile delinquency	
10	Poor behavioural controls		20	Revocation of conditional release	

**It is not uncommon for people to approach me and say, well I know someone who has 3 or 4 of those characteristics. Are they psychopathic? I say of course not.**

**– Dr. Robert Hare**

# 8 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE – THE PROS AND THE CONS

## 8.1 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE – THE PROS

*Emotional Intelligence is the ability to be proficient in recognising, understanding and managing our own emotions, and that of others emotions.*

Since Daniel Goleman's book Emotional intelligence (EI) – Why it can matter more than IQ was first published in 1995. EI or EQ instruments have been widely used within organisational settings to select or develop high performing leaders. In my working career as an organisational psychologist, I have spent a significant amount of time profiling, accrediting, training and coaching individuals in the areas of emotionally intelligence. My involvement and work with Professor Reuven Bar-On, who coined the term EQ, has provided me with a front row seat for observing just how emotional intelligence can have obviously the bright side (the pros), but can also a much darker side (the cons).

## 8.2 HIGH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE – THE PROS

Firstly, I know of many good and productive psychopathic senior level individuals who I would use their high levels of emotional intelligence in which to charm and manipulate others into getting them, on their side. Their behavior is similar to that of James Bonds (007) Roger Moore (pictured left) who used his charm, grandiosity and mischievousness in which to dangle Money Penny on a string.

However, the difference between 007's display of psychopathic traits compared with those of a truly downright ugly psychopath, as portrayed by the Bond villain, Ernst Stavro Blofeld. (pictured right) was that Roger Moore's 007 psychopathic traits were tempered with having the *emotional capacity* and a dose of *empathy* to know when to turn the dials (charm, grandiosity, mischievous cunning) “*up* or *down*” a notch, as and when required, only tuning the notch up when in his line of duty and being licensed to kill the baddies.



**Image No 12** Roger Moore and Money Penny

Source: obr. A tribute to roger moore



**Image No 13** Bond villain, Ernst Stavro Blofeld

Source James Bond villains

### 8.3 LOW EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE – THE CONS

There are very clear differences in the emotional intelligence levels between for instance a:

- Good and productive psychopathic leader who has the emotional capacity to manage, regulate and control themselves and others.
- Bad leader, who requires some “EQ tweaking” via an assessment, coaching or training route.
- Downright ugly psychopathic leader who is devoid of empathy with *low* emotional Intelligence capability. Therefore in order to compensate, will *act, con and mimic* their way into a senior management position in ways that make them appear ‘on the surface’ to come across as being emotionally intelligent.

By taking a baseline measurement of an individual’s social and emotional intelligence (EQ), this would act as an additional *insight* into their psychological make-up “red flagging” any vulnerabilities for the potential forecasting of toxic leadership behaviors.

## 9 MEASURING FOR TOXIC TRAITS

### 9.1 PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

While a behavioural and panel based structured interview format are a good tool to use during the recruitment and selection process, and can help to identify a number of traits, the use of psychometric testing reinforces what was observed during the interview process. Psychometric Testing is commonly used by organisations at the screening stage with cognitive and aptitude assessments being widely used.

*Put simply, “psychometric” means mental measurement, so psychometric tests (questionnaires, inventories, tools, assessments or instruments) measure aspects of the individual such as ability, personality, motivation, competencies, behaviours and interests.*

Whilst the use of psychometric testing will provide useful insights associated with psychopathic traits and characteristics such as an inability to work with others and low emotional intelligence, it is by no means sufficient to give someone the label of being a psychopath. The intention is for a psychometric measurement to serve as “red flags” during the selection process, and to be used alongside other forms of collaborating evidence including reference checks and work samples (Chapter 6).



**Image No 14** Psycho  
Source: Pin Interest

*Psychometric Testing can be costly, but when you consider the collateral damage that can occur from a downright ugly psychopathic leader let lose within an organisation, it is money well spent.*

## 9.2 ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE SURVEYS

Organisational Climate surveys provide an organisation with a “temperature reading”. This establishes the likely causes of, amongst other symptoms, poor productivity, low morale and increases in staff turnover. Implicit Attitude Testing theory (Anthony Greenwald and colleagues 1998), has been used by organisations for years to establish how customers perceive their brand integrity or image. Now, with the alignment of corporate governance and corporate responsibility becoming joined at the hip, forward thinking organisations are seeking out more innovative and advanced measures in which to detect dysfunctional and toxic behaviours in the workplace.

Modern image profiling techniques (Dr Nigel Marlow and Dorothy Spry 2016) are now being used to detect the strength of a person’s “automatic association” with significant *words* or *images*, which in turn can be used to uncover the hidden drivers of poorly adjusted organisational behaviour such as gender, age and racial stereotyping, bullying, sexual harassment, back-stabbing and other antisocial, anti-team building behaviours.

# 10 THE RISE OF THE AUTHENTIC AND EMPATHIC LEADER

*It is time to “rethink” the old fashioned assumption that ruthlessness and callousness are favourable traits for an organisation to have.*

– (Leanne ten Brinke, Assistant professor of psychology at the University of Denver, 2015)

## 10.1 AUTHENTIC AND EMPATHIC LEADERSHIP

Two of the most important qualities for strong and effective leadership is for the leader to have an authentic and empathic character. Authentic and empathic leaders have a positive outlook on life, and because of their open and honest empathic leadership style they come across to others i.e. employees as a person whom they can trust and look up to. What gives authentic and empathic leaders the edge over toxic and inauthentic leaders is not only their authenticity, but that they follow a *moral code of ethics and values* in which they will not deviate from, even when placed under a significant amount of pressure from others to cut corners, or take risks in order to increase profit margins.

## 10.2 Healthy profit margins and healthy employees

There is a strong and rapidly growing business case for employing or developing an authentic and empathic leader and, that in fact, we have been looking up to the “wrong type of leaders” as the following evidence demonstrates:

1. Data collected from 1,600 employees from 77 organisations found a significant correlation between profits and productivity if the leader displays authentic empathic leadership. (Christine Boedler Australian School of Business 2012).
2. Eighty four CEO’s and more than 8,000 employees were followed over the course of 7 years. The findings reported that under authentic and empathic leadership the employees were happy and strived to work harder, felt valued and respected, with the organisations profitability being 5 times greater than leaders who were self-centered and greedy. Fred Kiel (2015), Return on Character: The Real Reason Leaders and Their Companies Win.

3. Research conducted by the center for creative leadership aptly named: *What you Need, and Still don't have when it comes to Leadership Talent* (2015), found that 38% of new CEO's fail within the first 18 months of their employment, with the significant failures being nothing to do with their knowledge, experience and technical skills, but with poor emotional intelligence, inflated ego and toxic and destructive handling of customers and employees.
4. A study by researchers from the University of Denver and the University of California, Berkeley, compared the personality traits of 101 hedge fund managers with their investments and financial returns from 2005 to 2015, and found that Hedge fund managers scoring higher for psychopathy – performance levels were far poorer than their colleagues.

***We have developed a "mythology of leadership" and it is all built on BS. Workplaces are filled with disengaged, dissatisfied, employees who don't trust their leaders and cannot wait to leave their jobs.***

**– Jeffrey Pfeffer, Leadership with BS Fixing Workplaces and Careers One Truth at a Time (2015)**

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Just the thought of the existence of a downright ugly psychopath wandering the corridors of an organisation should be of interest to those involved in corporate management and corporate governance, because it is their very presence that influences the way organisations are run and their negative effects both on society and the environment we live in.

Confronting the truth can be hard to believe, particularly when the word psychopath is normally a term associated with serial killers and cold hearted murderers, and it is part of human nature to want to believe that there is goodness to be found in everyone, and that we all are capable of “feeling” empathy, compassion and remorse. Sadly, this is not the reality and appearances can be deceiving particularly when having to contend with a smooth talking and highly manipulative pathological liar.

A positive step forward would to develop leaders and potential leaders in what constitutes good authentic and empathic leadership, and, by setting up the appropriate selection and development procedures in which to screen and identify those individuals who indeed have the “emotional capacity” in which to work effectively with others as well as significantly improve profit margins, for which the evidence presented in this e-book demonstrates.

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