

...with Elizabeth Peel

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One moment that changed the course of your career

My aim as an undergraduate at the University of Nottingham was to go into clinical psychology (I was subsequently offered a place on the UEL training course, which I declined) but after finding feminist psychology and meeting Professor Celia Kitzinger I was enthused to apply for a PhD with her in the Social Sciences Department at Loughborough University. Being part of the Discourse and Rhetoric and Women's Studies Research groups there in the late 1990s/early 2000s was a transformational experience in terms of shaping my aspiration to be an academic.

One book that you think all psychologists should read

I recently enjoyed Lynne Segal's (2013) *Out of Time: The Pleasure and Perils of Ageing*. It's a compassionate book, and I like this thought: '...for those of us wanting to confront the most damaging

clichés of ageing, we can at least begin by querying the cultural obsession with notions of "independence" in favour of acknowledging the value of our life-long mutual dependence. This is the human condition.'

One psychological superpower I'd like to have

To make common sense sound novel.

One thing that you would change about psychology

If I had my way, big P psychology would be (re)branded as a social science. Less radically, a greater valuing of critical and/or qualitative psychological research across the discipline would suffice. In health realms especially the emphasis on a 'gold standard' form of knowledge (typically

derived from the randomised controlled trial) can be a frustration for the qualitative health researcher.



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One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

For aspiring women psychologists particularly (but not exclusively), try to quash any feelings of fraudulence, believe in yourself and you will achieve your goals.

One cultural recommendation

Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) is still a highly relevant and compelling feminist utopia.

One alternative career path you may have chosen

I am reasonably arty and periodically fantasise I could

have had an alternative career as a potter or sculptor.

One heroine

American psychologist Helen Thompson Woolley (1874–1947) for her conclusion on examining the research conducted into sex differences that characterised women as inferior to men: 'there is perhaps no field aspiring to be scientific where flagrant personal bias, logic martyred in the course of supporting a prejudice, unfounded assertions, and even sentimental rot and drivel, have run riot to such an extent as here'. Epic!

One problem that psychology should deal with

I would like to see more academic thought and psychological practice focused on improving the situation for people living with a dementia, and their families and supporters. Helpfully the government is in agreement!

One hope for the future of psychology

That the fashion for neuroscience doesn't mean that there is no space within the discipline for more social, qualitative or critical voices. We are far more than our brains and neurons. My (idealistic) hope is for a less fragmented and factional discipline that values a plurality of ways of knowing about psychological and social concerns.

One final thought

'It always seems impossible until it's done' (Nelson Mandela).

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resource

'I still like an early article I wrote entitled "Mundane heterosexism: Understanding incidents of the everyday" (2001). And it still feels like a coup to have published an article based on the perspectives of people with type 2 diabetes in the *BMJ* (2007)."

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