

*Disapprobation* **Objection** **Animosity** **Condemnation** *Discontentedness*  
**Malevolence** *Recalcitrance* **DISLIKES** *Defiance* *Malice* **Contempt**  
**Challenge** *Grievance* *Enmity* **Unfounded**  
*Annoyances* *Inconsistencies*  
**Nauseation** *Susceptibility*  
*Infuriation* *Opposition*  
**Outbursts** *Revulsion*  
**Despise** **Vexation**  
**Censure** *Umbrage*  
*Chagrin* *Distaste*  
**Shame** *Worry*  
*Pique* *Abhor*  
**Rant** **Rage**  
*Storm* *Fury*  
**Attack** *Bother*  
*Tirade* *Despise*  
**Disdain** **Rancour**  
*Loathing* *Acrimony*  
**Nuisance** *Disagree*  
*Harangue* *Abhorrence*  
**Execrates** *Antagonistic*  
**Resentment** **Remonstrance**  
**Exasperations** *Offensiveness*  
*Counter-Argument* *Mockery* *Inaccurate*  
**Averseness** *Fulmination* **Reluctance** *Invective* **Reprobation**



# COUPS

*Allergy* *Abomination* *Antipathy* **de** *Chutzpah* *Critics* *Conflict*  
*Anathema* *Anger* *Antipasti* *Contrariety* *Cannelloni*

# GUEULE

**Partiality** *Petulance* **Protest** *Poisonous* *Pervasive* **Disesteem**  
*Partisanship* **Disinclination**  
**Pettishness** **Disapproval**  
*Preconception* **Depreciation**  
**Prejudice** *Denunciation*  
*Polemics* **Dissatisfaction**  
*Peevishness* *Intolerable* *Indisposition* *Ire* **Incompatibility** **Detestation**  
*Pernicious* **Indignation** *Irascibility* *Irritations* *Injustice* **Displeasure**

**Patrick Demoucelle**

Torment

Nuisance  
Offensiveness

Deprecation

Loathing

Pride-wounded  
Repugnance




# “COUPS DE GUEULE”

by PATRICK DEMOUCELLE

This file contains a series of “coups de gueule”, I have been wanted to express for a long time. ‘Coup de gueule’ (singular), or ‘coups de gueule’ (plural, definitely the case here) is a French term very hard to translate in English. And quite hard to pronounce: /ku d(ə) gœl/

In one word? I’d say *rant* or *outburst*. In two words? I’d go with *critical viewpoint* or *emotional objection*. In more words? ‘*A loud expression of discontent*’ would do. Anyway to clarify or to confuse, on the cover page, I have put exactly 100 words<sup>1</sup>, which are not the translation of Coup de Gueule, but which collectively give a sense of what it alludes to.

Now that the concept is more clear (or more confused), this is what I want to talk about:

-  things that bother me;
-  people who drive me crazy;
-  behaviours that don’t pass *my* sunshine test.

I intend to have 7 — it’s a mythical, magical, biblical number.

Below is my current list. Six down, one to go.

1. Louis Pasteur & Robin Hood: Pet Peeves, Not Role Models (*ready*)
2. ‘Beat Yesterday’, an Insult to Half of Us (*almost ready*)
3. The Myth of the Hidden Gem (*ready*)
4. Unqualified *and* Opinionated, Uncontrolled Social Damage (*ready*)
5. Searching Finders (and Only Finding Searchers) (*almost ready*)
6. Homo *Corectus* vs Homo *Distinctus*: Survival of the Fittest (*ready*)
7. TBD (*nowhere*)

But is it six relevant, provocative, interesting ones?

Of course, the selection of the topics is biased, random, and prejudiced.

And the writing of the viewpoints is subjective, partial, and incomplete.

Exposing myself to become others’ pet peeve, not one’s hidden gem. Disserting on topics for which I am unqualified yet opinionated (one of both is true anyway). All that to fail as an homo *distinctus*, unable to beat yesterday. Drown in the emptiness of my own glass of water.

Well, you know what? That’s a delightful perspective I am looking forward to!

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<sup>1</sup> Counting actually 102 words, yet two of those are consumed in Italian restaurants



Les “coups de gueule de Patrick”,  
Premier coup de gueule:

## LOUIS PASTEUR & ROBIN HOOD: PET PEEVES, NOT ROLE MODELS

**What is common between the French preeminent scientist, father of the (western) modern medicine, and the English folklore outlaw hero, robbing the rich and feeding the poor? Two brave men, two defenders of the citizens, especially the sick and the indigent. Well, not exactly. They were two villains whose thoughts, beliefs, and actions have worked against the progress of our society. It is time to restore the truth on the real impact of Louis Pasteur on our ‘bodies’, and of Robin Hood on our ‘moneys’.**

“Who are your pet peeves<sup>2</sup>,” inquired Anja. Before answering, I asked her to clarify. “Pet peeves are things or people that you hate, that for whatever reason drive you crazy, yet they are broadly liked or admired. We all have pet peeves, I just wanna know who are yours.” She was interviewing me for the internal Bain & Company newsletter. Bain employees would read this and are very much looking up to what Partners think, do and say. The risk-averse (read: politically correct) answer would have been to diffuse the question or to answer it in a broader perspective. In the spirit of being ‘true north’ with myself, I went for the risk-prone statement instead, and immediately answered: Louis Pasteur and Robin Hood. There was a large incredulous smile on Anja’s face. I understood I had to explain myself.

1880, Paris, France. Louis Pasteur publishes his concept of ‘germs theory’ postulating that (most) diseases come from a virus, bacteria or any form of germ that is out there in the air. So the role of modern medicine is to find the right pill to kill the right germ. Vaccination is Pasteur’s corollary concept: inject an inactive version of the germ so the body creates anti corps. And ‘pasteurisation’, mind the name, is to flash nutrients at ultra high temperature to kill the germs they contain. Read the small prints on your ‘UHT-pasteurised’ milk bottle.

On the 140th anniversary of their inception, let’s restore the truth about Louis Pasteur’s theories. He has incorrectly judged the roots of medicine and has embarked the medical world on a “therapeutic” and “external” view of medicine. The medical community started to focus on germ-killing medication. This concept became ingrained into medicine and medical research.

The \$3.4 trillion pharmaceutical industry flourished on Pasteur’s principles with limited success and removed responsibility. Limited success: though germ-killing medication has successfully taken away some of the symptoms and pain, it has not found the answer to many infectious and almost all degenerative diseases. Removed responsibility: the

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<sup>2</sup> L’expression ‘pet peeves’ est intraduisible, elle est une combinaison de ‘bête noire’, ‘ennemi préféré’, et ‘irritateur personnel’

burden of caring for health has been taken away from the individual. If germs from the air cause disease, then the medical community must find the answer. The individual is not responsible. He is educated to be dependant on doctors and pills. His responsibility is to take the pills, not to develop his immunity.

We should give the responsibility for health back to the individual. Germs from the air cause disease only when one's immune system is weak. For this the individual is responsible. He must be educated to be less dependent on doctors and pills. His responsibility is to develop his immunity, not to take the pills.

By widely applying Pasteur's principles and focusing on therapeutic pills instead of immunity strengthening, the whole pharma industry has endorsed the complicity coat. Under the fallacy that this was the surest way to healing people. Promoting a scientist who made the world believe in: individual non-responsibility, external blame, big brotherism, cupidity, closed-mind, greed, and what not. And we all swallowed it, *twice*. What a shame...

1180, Sherwood Forest, near Nottingham, England. King Richard I comes back from the Third Crusade to discover Prince John is usurping his throne. And that a skilled archer, named Robin Hood, declared outlaw by the reigning duo of John and the Sherif of Nottingham, had remained loyal to the king. Robin and his bunch of outlaws help the King back to his throne. Robin receives the hand of Belle Lady Marian and a significant wedding dot from the King —so he doesn't have to work anymore.

On the 840th anniversary of its conception, let's restore the truth about Robin Hood's fairy-tale. He is depicted in English folklore as the leader of a gang of murderers, marauders and other people of little virtue, who were robbing the rich at night and hiding in the forest at day. He doesn't work, he has no day or night job. His contribution to GDP is zero. He steals money from the ones who work hard (and God knows how hard one worked in those times) to redistribute it to the lazy, the ones that do not work (and Robin knows how grateful they were). He is acting as a self-declared social security redistributor, and a costly one, retaining more money for himself than an entire room of civil servants at the peak of Keynesian overstuffed back-office administrations. The money he steals is from the hard working population, money hard-earned. He attacks the working class and defends the lazy, the outlaws.

By popularising Robin Hood even further, Disney has endorsed the complicity coat. Under the fallacy that he was protecting people. Promoting a hero whose values are: laziness, stealing, disobedience, disorder, organised crime, worklessness, and what not. And this was created for the children to watch. What a shame...

As concluding take-away, here is my key message, the lesson I learned out of this:

*“Behind every role models potentially hides a villain.  
In everything good there is something bad — face it.”*

Les “coups de gueule de Patrick”,  
Deuxième coup de gueule:

## ‘BEAT YESTERDAY’ IS AN INSULT TO HALF OF US

**“Go faster. Grow. Perform better everyday. Smash your records. Become a better version of yourself. And beat the others. Beat competition. Be the best that you can be.”** Personal and professional development urge you repeatedly to push your limits. I’ve been there: 20 years as pushed performer; 20 years as pushing advisor. *‘Beat yesterday’* had become my life’s motto and my coaching punchline. Until I realised I was wrong. Completely wrong. For me and for half of the population *‘beat yesterday’* is nothing short of an insult. Let me explain...

55 years old, I am starting to realise the traditional messages of motivational speakers don’t fit with my personae, mentally and physically. Any motivational speech includes words of aspiration, always aiming to be better, perfectly captured in the two words “beat yesterday” – words I have preached all my life. These are the messages I send to life: words of aspiration.

15 years with a degenerative and incurable disease in my body are taking their toll. The message life is sending through first-hand experience now are more of the kind: *“Go slower. Stop skiing, stop biking, stop driving. Learn to walk with a cane. Don’t cross a street alone anymore. Increase your medicine intake constantly”*. And in truth, every day the disease is progressing and every day my body is regressing. And I cannot beat yesterday anymore. These are the messages life sends me: words of desperation.

Words of aspiration or words of desperation? What’s the difference? do I have the choice? As all these symptoms worsen over time, every day is about fighting regression, not beating yesterday.

40 years old, the decline started. For me, accelerated by Parkinson’s Disease. But, I’ve been told it’s the same for everyone, no degenerative disease is requested to decline. At the 20km of Brussels, large-sample measures reveal a loss of 3 minutes with each year passing by (i assume for the 40+ bracket, not for the 16-25).

25 years old precisely, I was assistant teacher in finance and researcher in econometrics at the University of Brussels. Yes, I did regressions Regression? Incidentally I discovered the origins of the statistical concept of ‘regression’. It was first invented as a statistical method to measure evolution of human characteristics and capabilities as age evolves. And hey found a ‘regression’, which gave its name to the method. We now say: “let’s perform a regression on the data”. So the name of the statistical measure of development over time contains and names the real conclusion: beat yesterday is wrong, regress tomorrow is right.

The 'beat yesterday discours' is not for half of the population, and especially not for the elderly and the ones with degenerative diseases.

And that can have dramatic consequences. How many former Olympic gold medalists have fallen into depression because they couldn't perform anymore at their top level. Depression. Depression is a parallel form of regression: regression of the willpower.

This double regression, physical and mental, is a crisis, a downturn. Like a stock market crashing hard. Yet the comparison stops there, as there is one big difference: after every (financial) crisis there is always an 'upturn' — not for me. Sso, who would invest in a perpetual declining stock? Nobody! Sell short, with an option to buyback when it's cheap.

So as I won't rebound like financial assets, friends and family should sell me short, with a later buyback option. And some have sold snort, disappeared from my life, not contacting me anymore. It's in moments of crises that you recognise true friends and loose those who were not.

But let's look at that buyback option, shall we not? I haven't figure out yet what it is. My imagination drifts from the most material option such as my heritage, to the most spiritual option such as some form of resurrection, and the karma in my next life. Maybe on the light tunnel one is traveling at high speed when very near death — one thing I don't know — that a last speed record is broken, beating all yesterdays. There are no speeding tickets there — thats one thing I know, by intuition or foresight.

And it gets worse with ageing.

xxx

And it gets worst when facing death. The physical regression can be extreme as one is nearing death. The mental regression can become unbearable as you are aware nearing the end. Imagine you reach your 'last month' of your life indicator. Do you think 'beat yesterday' or 'beat Parkinson's'. Do you daydream about vision or about souvenirs? Do you plan on building castles or do you plan to enjoy your bedroom two more days?

There are, maybe unexpectedly, three avenues to drive away from the beat yesterday vicious circle: switch focus, abandon credo, or rejuvenate yourself.

Switch focus: beat yesterday is not limited to physical performances; your growth is now spiritual, development of your wisdom and intelligence. That's what everyone advises me. It seems logic to them. Until I realise they are all from the opposite category: they are not old nor sick. They are still in the full force experiencing of beat yesterday, which works for them. Why listen to their advice about a life they don't experience? So I asked the old and the sick, about 'switch focus', and I received mixed views (or no views) at first, then by digging deeper some nostalgia of the past, not everyone being able to switch away from it.

Abandon the credo 'beat yesterday': if you can't switch away from it, then try and replace it. Replace it with what? Replace it with...Honestly I don't know. We all need a driver in

our life. Where there is no driving force anymore, people perish. So I have tried a few replacement credos, like “enjoy the present”, “nurture micro-moments of happiness”, “be selfish: do what you like”, or “be altruistic: help and give”. I have tried meditation, yoga, nature, exercise, rest and relaxation, kine and osteopathy; alone and with gurus. The result has zero impact on my physical regression, but a lot on my mental acceptance.

Which leaves me with the simplest and most unrealisable avenue: rejuvenate myself. In one word ‘heal’. It is definitely the solution simplest to understand, the one that I would sign for, but is the least realistic. Where is the ‘*elixir de jeunesse*’? Where is the cure to Parkinson?. Turn back the clock or turn up the dopamine, or both. Utopia? Vision of a dream future? Big enough to drop beat yesterday!

You must adopt one of these three avenues, if you want to escape the fatal evolution of regression, physically and mentally.

As concluding take-away, here is my key message, the lesson I learned out of this:

*“One who doesn’t aim to beat yesterday,  
when young and strong, is an idiot.  
One who still aims to beat yesterday,  
when old and wise, remains an idiot.”*

Les “coups de gueule de Patrick”,  
Troisième coup de gueule:

## THE MYTH OF THE HIDDEN GEM

***“I know someone who can help you. You should really go see him. Let me warn you, he is a bit ‘special’ but he will do wonders for your incurable disease. He is a genius. Few people know him, but I’ll get you a rendez-vous. He is so impressive. I’m really willing to help you!”*** I should have walked away, changed the conversation, or find a near-perfect excuse. But I was weak and said ‘yes’. I knew it since her first sentence, this was going to be my big mistake, yet I followed her advise —and it was.

Because she believed in it. Truly and honestly. She was convinced she had found the ‘hidden doctor’, the only person in the world who could heal me. So I went there, if only to please her, and it was like the 99 other visits to ‘this-unknown-guru-who-can-help-you-heal’. At best satisfying my curiosity by meeting someone ‘special’, not to say eccentric, at worst dealing with another incompetent charlatan on the verge of illegal practice of medicine, but in all cases a blatant waste of my time.

It reminds me of this small wine-shop retailer in the neighbourhood, and friend of mine, who told me *“I have found some unknown little rosé wine from a local producer I visited. It is so good! You should try it. From a passionate small producer no one knows about (but me, sic). You’ll find his cuvée spéciale only in my shop. And for a reasonable price!”* Adding, to convince me: *“Actually it’s intriguing how I found him. My car broke down near that little village in the Côtes de Ports, and I walked in front of his domaine while searching for a garage. I saw no signs outside, yet some instinct pushed me to step in. And I discovered a hidden gem: a delicious little wine, as good as many Grand Crus, if not better. Funny how life can be leading you sometimes!”*

I couldn’t resist. Put me one case, no, correction, two cases, after all your car broke down.

The wine was below average, a blatant waste of my money. Like the unknown brilliant specialist, the unknown brilliant wine is a fool’s trap. Except here, contrary to my first caring friend, the wine retailer can’t truly and honestly believe what he says. The wine is nothing special, he should know it, he should taste it, that’s his job. And not a good value for the price; definitely not what I would buy for a *grande* occasion. The truth is this: the small local wine retailer can’t compete with online stores for good wines and can’t get access to the very best bottles. His only possible differentiating strategy is to propose excellent *and* unknown bottles (perhaps a contradiction in terms), i.e. hidden gems. Yet, if that small wine producer was any good, why would he be known only to my local wine shop, about 1000 km away and disposing of very limited bandwidth in field presence, in local coverage, and in tasting time availability —and with a broken car? Is the wine

producer trying as much as he can to stay unknown? Is he hiding from the whole world but from my friend?

Let me translate for you. Hidden gems do not exist. They are a myth. An illusionary market place where supply is driven by unverified marketing claims, and demand by unverified naivety complaints. In these *glocal* times we live in, true gems are not hidden, or rather cannot stay hidden for long. Either because they are not hiding or because they are no gem. 'Excellent' and 'unknown', are, over time, definitively a contradiction in terms. They cannot sustainably co-exist. Why would a true maestro doctor or virtuoso winemaker remain largely secret, but for the disinterested friend or the interested reseller? There I have no answer. And why would the latter promote them? Here I have an answer: a selfless combination of caring and ignorance for the disinterested friend, a more selfish business *nous* (maybe with a *soupçon* of greed) for the interested retailer.

Beat your naivety next time a 'friend' proposes you to meet 'the hidden guru' or buy 'the hidden product or service'. If you want to avoid ultimate disappointment and save your friend from ruining her credibility, simply say NO —or go only for the sake of curiosity. If these hidden ones are any good now (or potentially), they won't be hidden (or not for long). So wait until the *recluse* is recognised by the medical community, wait until the *piquette* receives a medal at a reputed wine-tasting concours. Then you can recommend it to others, but not as a hidden gem, well as a demonstrated best practice —underline 'demonstrated'.

As concluding take-away, here is my key message, the lesson I learned out of this:

***“One builds credibility by offering sound advise,  
not by sending hope messages that will ultimately deceit.”***

Les “coups de gueule de Patrick”,  
Quatrième coup de gueule:

## UNQUALIFIED AND OPINIONATED, UNCONTROLLED SOCIAL DAMAGE

***“The more flights you take, the closer you come to that fatal accident. That’s simple statistics. I fly so often, the probability I crash on my next flight is higher than for you. Statistics are not in my favour!”*** said Gauthier, bragging the entire dinner about his heavy flight schedule and the ever increasing risk. I hesitated to embarrass him in public. As we left the party, walking to our respective cars, I took him by the shoulders: ***“Gauthier, It’s not that statistics are not in your favour. It’s rather that statistics are not one of your strengths.”***

Gauthier and I were students at the catholic secondary school of Genval. We were close friends, probably attracted more by our differences than by our common interests. While I was the first-in-class, serious and disciplined pupil, Gauthier was the outgoing vocal *fanfaron*, prone to tell unbelievable stories, which captivated me, yet unable to perform in any exam and failing year after year with the poorest results of any class he ended in. We kept being friends, because I liked his stories and because he needed my reassurance.

As the years passed we lost contact. Until that famous dinner at common friends. I found an older Gauthier complaining all the evening, and bragging about the worst part of his boring job: the number of flights. As an ex student in econometrics and advanced statistics, among others, I decided to rectify some profound lack of knowledge.

As in school, I wanted to reassure Gauthier: *“You’re not more at risk than anyone. The probability of crashing in a plane is not linked to how many flights you have done prior to that one. Flying consists statistically of what is called stochastically independent events.”* “So what?” Gauthier nervously answers.

I tried in more simple words: *“What if the person seated on the other aisle of your plane is at her first flight and you are close to your 500th? Is your side of the plane going to crash and her side not?”*

Gauthier looked at me as if I was dumb: *“Well in that case I suppose you take the average flying history across all passengers. That’s simple statistics.”*

I couldn’t believe it, so I pressed: *“Do you include in the average the pilots and the crew? Because then I would prefer a debutant pilot over an experienced one, it’d be more safer if I believe you! Furthermore, if two planes take-off simultaneously for the same route, one with noisy boy-scouts departing to their first camp and one with senior business executives going to their fiftieth congress, if I were the pilot I would lobby to fly the boy-scouts, that should be more relaxing.”*

I am profoundly shocked whenever I hear somebody say something which is utterly wrong, and being convinced it is right. When we were in Genval’s school, there was a teacher who graded us: 18/20 for me and 8/20 for Gauthier. Ten years later the opinions

and reflections on precise topics still exist and in most cases the quality of the answers has remained 18 vs 8, but there is no more teacher to give these grades. So Gauthier is not corrected, he is not even aware he is telling stupidities.

As if the absence of school metrics meant the disappearance of his intellectual weaknesses.

I profoundly dislike it when 'unqualified' people voice strong opinions in public, especially when it's on serious matters, believe they are right, and argue to be right. This is how social media becomes uncontrollable. This is how fake news is launched. This is how the world loses its objectivity. And this is how you annoy friends at a dinner — and occasionally lose one.

In those future-ex covid times, it's easy to voice a strong opinion without having the qualifications to do. Not knowing the underlying trends, facts and data, yet talking as if you knew all about it. Often the strong opinion they take is to qualify wrong someone being or to qualify impossible some action. We hear them say *"this is impossible"*, *"we will never make it"* or *"no one can do that"*.

One of my favourite quotes is; *"Nothing is more rewarding than somebody saying it's impossible, interrupted by someone saying: I have done it"*. And then the one being interrupted doesn't always realise he should feel stupid!

Einstein said the definition of a wise person is one who searches and finds the most stupid question to ask, then refrains from asking it. Do not talk about things you don't know, even things you believe you do. In short, don't be opinionated if you are unqualified.

As concluding take-away, here is my key message, the lesson I learned out of this:

***"Is smart one who doesn't listen when the idiot speaks;  
is idiot one who doesn't silence when the smart speaks."***

Les “coups de gueule de Patrick”,  
Cinquième coup de gueule:

## SEARCHING FINDERS (AND ONLY FINDING RESEARCHERS)

**It all started with my first job. I was assistant teacher, but had to do research. I was asked to search, while what I just wanted was to teach. Nobody asked me to find, just to ‘do research’. Nobody told me on what. I had to figure it out myself. Two years later I had searched. I had found nothing, because I had no clue what to find. I was briefed on what to search, never on what to find. Had they called my position Finder instead of Researcher, I would have known more what to do. The world would be more advanced with ‘searching’ replaced by ‘finding’.**

Scientific researchers —in fact, any researcher— explore, try, experiment, reproduce, test, and much more. And they don’t know *what* they will find. They don’t even know *if* they will find. Having been a researcher myself (on ‘micro-finance’, mind you), I always take pleasure when I meet a young researcher to ask him “*what are you working on?*” (the friendly question). And always comes the same passionate answer: “*I do research in the area of valuation of stock options, or on stem cells therapy, or on the stability of atoms in quantum physics*”. And then details the areas he specialises in.

Not a word on what he expects to find. He will explain the experiments or analyses carried out. Do not make the mistake of asking him “*what have you found so far?*” (the hostile question). Here, always comes an embarrassment reaction: you see their face changing and their enthusiasm gone. They will either mumble some scientific jargon or tell you their PhD typically lasts 3 to 6 years so it is way too early to talk about findings, or they simply go blank. The most enormous answer I ever got was from his 12-years long researcher in ‘applied mathematics’ who said: “You don’t understand, I do research. My goal is not to find anything but to make science progress, and to make me get published.”

Ah! Being published, finally we come to the core of the problem. The success of any researcher is measured by the quantity and quality of publications. That’s their driver. Publishing papers have mostly little to do with finding answers.

++++beefup++++

Beyond the world of research, everyone also uses the word ‘search’ (and very few ones ‘find’). Google search, proposes to search, using a search engine. When you’re lost you say “I’m searching my way” not “I am finding my way” though that’s exactly what you do.  
++++other examples+++

Maybe there is an unspeakable rule that “searching is more noble than finding”. Maybe there’s a greedy behavior that as long as you search you keep your salary, while as soon as you find it’s gone. Maybe there is this noble modesty not to talk about the achievement

before you embark on the journey. Maybe there is the competitive fear that others might catch you and pass over you, so you keep your secrets.

Whatever the reasons, the world thinks 'search' not 'find'. This must have a big negative impact on the speed of innovation, on the contribution to GDP, on the cost to the taxpayer. The most important thing though is that it is not purpose-driven, it is conditional. Expect fewer breakthroughs. Not purpose-driven?

Indeed the destination of a researcher depends on the road he follows. This is totally the opposite of visionaries: they set the point of arrival, then adjust the road to go there. Researchers don't. They start on a specific road (given or chosen) then read everything they find on that road, then see if they can explore further. They are condition-driven, not ambition-driven.

wrongly attributed to General de Gaulle is this marvellous quote: "*Des chercheurs qui cherchent on en trouve; des chercheurs qui trouvent on en cherche.*" So, enough about the searching searchers, let's bow switch to the finders.

Yet, what is a 'finder'?

I left University research to join Arthur D Little whom later I recalled was nicknamed "the problem solvers". Then ten years later I joined Bain & Company whose first training I attended was simply called 'Answer-first'. Yes madam.

For the last 2 years I try to plan every Friday at 16:00 a discussion session I call "The Answers", with one and only one guest. The purpose is to refrain from asking questions. And concentrate on making strong hypotheses, educated opinions, unproved claims, fact-based reversed conclusions and more. The outputs are at their best "visionary statements" (eg on the topic of social unrest in European big cities: "*les forces de l'ordre ne sont pas préparées à la gestion des émeutes urbaines*", or on the topic of MOOCS: "This is the slow death of traditional MBA's"), at worst "nice quotes to use in public (eg "*There is nothing more rewarding than...*" or "*Dont cry its over; smile you had it*"). I pick my 'one guest' very carefully. I usually don't warn them ahead.

As concluding take-away, here is my key message, the lesson I learned out of this:

***"Switch your mindset. Tweak your vocabulary.  
Out goes 'search', in comes 'find'"***

Les “coups de gueule de Patrick”,  
Sixième coup de gueule:

## HOMO CORECTUS VS HOMO DISTINCTUS (SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST)

**Your child brings home her school report: all scores of 9/10 or 10/10, but one sole 3/10. What are you (and all parents) looking at? What do you say? The traditional view on capabilities is that you should first and foremost correct what's missing. Work on the 3/10. And what if the opposite were true: shouldn't sharpening your strengths come before wiping your weaknesses? Instead of breeding average, undifferentiated '*homo corectus*', wouldn't it be better to encourage the development of the '*homo distinctus*', literally “the one that stands out”?**

Most of us have been educated in a system that looks at averages and at skills gaps (the low scores, the lone 3/10). Prolonged in the corporate world, and projected on the corporate ladder, this creates a species of '*homo corectus*', literally “the corrected one”. Constantly corrected by his teachers, then by his bosses, then later, if he is any motivated to grow, by himself. Bred under the dogmatic mental model that anyone who has the good intention to grow, learn, and develop to the next level, should focus on one critical thing: wipe their weaknesses.

And that leads to suboptimal individual growth and incomplete team contribution. And neither you nor your team will be at full potential. Here are the three reasons why: decreased distinctiveness, intrinsic demotivation, and reduced need for cooperation.

First, decreased distinctiveness. Correcting weaknesses, in the eventuality you succeed in doing so, makes you average. Now, who wants to be average? On the opposite, taking one of your best strengths, and developing it even further, sharper, and stronger, pulls you farther away from 'being average'. It marks your distinctiveness, makes you unique, associates you with that very strong skill. In short, you stand out with your sharpened strength; you look average with your wiped weakness.

Second, intrinsic demotivation. Spending time on erasing weaknesses is not exciting, because it makes us work on things we don't like. Skills we don't have are often the result of areas we don't like. Remember your math course? Spending time on our weaknesses brings massive frustration and banalises failure. On the opposite, working on sharpening your existing best strengths is fun and brings excitement. If it's an area you're good at, there is a grand chance you are passionate about it, so you will love to learn and grow in those strong areas.

Finally, reduced need for cooperation. A team composed of '*homo corectus*' will be far from its full potential, average in all areas, and with more inclination towards internal competition than cooperation. On the opposite, sharpened strengths and differentiated

spikes foster cooperation within teams. Teaming up becomes a true necessity, complementarity surpasses competition. Furthermore, when you're distinctively strong in one area or skill, you become attractive, your presence in the team is (more) desired.

Instead of breeding undifferentiated, average '*homo corectus*', wouldn't it be better to encourage the development of the '*homo distinctus*', literally "the one that stands out"?

Take Lionel Messi. As a footballer in a forward playing position, he is supposed to demonstrate skills and work rate. Skills: right foot 5/10, left foot 10/10, header 5/10. Not that impressive (yes but what a left foot!). Work rate: defending when lost possession 5/10, distance covered per game 5/10, and we're very generous on this latter score. All 5's and one 10, that's rather poor (yes but what a left foot!).

What we suggest is to consider massively switching the focus during (self) evaluations from correcting people's weaknesses, to a focus first on sharpening the present strengths. Know their left foot, praise their left foot, make them use their left foot, sharpen their left foot. And you'll reap the triple impact of increased distinctiveness, intrinsic motivation, and enhanced cooperation. Good for you, good for your teams, good for your company!

As concluding take-away, here is my key message, the lesson I learned out of this:

*“While the many homo corectus are reluctantly trying to wipe their weaknesses and become average, the few homo distinctus are energetically sharpening their strengths and become even more outstanding.”*