

BOOK CONCEPT — FOR REVIEW

All Behaviour Is Learned.

Not All Behaviour Is Taught.

A concept paper. By Paul Roebuck, with Claude (Anthropic). 24 May 2026.

Working subtitle

“Why We Are the Way We Are — And What That Means for Change.”

Subtitle is for search visibility and shelf placement. The title is the argument; the subtitle is the search engine concession.

The core proposition

All adult behaviour was acquired through learning. Very little of that learning was deliberately taught. The strategies popularised by the contemporary behaviour-change literature consistently misread the difference — and the reader who has tried those strategies and stalled has been left without language for why.

This book makes the distinction, walks the reader through a fifteen-step developmental sequence built from thirty years of clinical, organisational, and personal practice, and explains — in each stage — what the popular literature has missed and what the reader can do once they have seen it.

All behaviour is learned. Not all behaviour is taught. Change is not what you were told it was.

The reader

The book has the widest natural readership of any in the author’s ecosystem. The primary reader is the intelligent adult who has read enough behaviour-change literature to be sceptical of it. Atomic Habits has sold approximately 20 million copies; Mindset, around 3 million; Thinking Fast and Slow, around 2.5 million. The reader of those books, returning to the category for a second purchase, is looking for the next tier of thinking and has not yet found it. This book is built for that reader.

The secondary reader is the professional whose work involves changing other people's behaviour and who privately suspects the public literature on behaviour change is thin — therapists, coaches, HR professionals, teachers, senior nurses, police trainers, probation officers, clergy. The title sentence hits this reader as something they have known without having had named. The book becomes a thing they recommend.

The tertiary reader is the reader of the author's first book — *Mind the Gap* (Roebuck, 2026), on the gap between AI behaviour and human behaviour — who has finished it and wants to understand the human-side observations in their own right. The cross-sell is real. The two books share the same author and the same observational instrument while observing different objects.

The construction — the developmental spine

The book is structured around a fifteen-step developmental sequence the author has used and refined in workshops, executive coaching engagements, training programmes and clinical practice since 2017. The sequence runs:

Recognition. Perception. Ownership. Internal Freedom. Identity. Aspiration. Belief. Vision. Action. Progress over Perfection. Failure. Persistence. Containment. Expansion. Meaning.

This is not a list of self-help topics. It is a clinical progression that maps the actual order in which behavioural change happens when it happens. The reader who is somewhere on the sequence will know it when they meet it. The reader who has not started will know where the work begins. The sequence has been stress-tested in front of real audiences for eight years.

The chapter architecture groups the fifteen stages into five parts: SEEING (Recognition, Perception); STANDING (Ownership, Internal Freedom, Identity); MOVING (Aspiration, Belief, Vision, Action); PERSISTING (Progress over Perfection, Failure, Persistence, Containment); ARRIVING (Expansion, Meaning).

At each stage, the book delivers the same three moves. First: name the developmental work the stage represents. Second: identify what the popular behaviour-change literature has got wrong about that stage — the specific corrective the title sentence demands. Third: illustrate with case material drawn from thirty years of practice across factory floors, boardrooms, therapy rooms and a cancer ward.

The framework beneath the surface

The book is structurally underpinned by an established clinical framework: the Shame-Response Continuum, and specifically the directional pair NGE (Not Good Enough) and

FOF (Fear of Failure / Not My Fault). The framework names the two opposite directions human beings regulate shame in under pressure — inward into absorption, outward into projection.

NGE and FOF are the canonical examples of the title sentence's argument. Nobody is taught to be Not Good Enough. Nobody is taught to deflect under criticism. These patterns arrive without instruction — from environment, attachment, repeated interactions, what was modelled, what was rewarded by silence, what was punished by withdrawal. They are learned. They were not taught. They surface across adult life — in jobs, in Hunter–Farmer dynamics, in the commercial taxonomy of Pegs / Holes / Hammers, in relationships, parenting, performance, illness, grief, retirement, and success.

The book does not require the reader to meet the framework explicitly. The framework sits underneath every chapter, providing the structural backbone for why the popular literature's prescriptions fail in the cases that resist them. The clinical reader will see the framework under every page. The general reader will feel the depth without needing the name.

A single late chapter — probably in Part Five, before Meaning — names the framework explicitly and points the reader to the author's other books (Where Does The Shame Go?, How to Behave, the future NGE-FOF calibration monograph) for those who want to go further. The new book is the door; the others are the rooms beyond it.

Why now

The behaviour-change category has matured over the last twenty years through three generations of thinking. The first generation was popular psychology (Covey, Carnegie). The second generation brought cognitive science into the mainstream (Kahneman, Ariely, Duhigg). The third generation built systematic habit-engineering (Clear, Fogg). Each generation has added value. Each has also reinforced a particular reading of behaviour change — that behaviour is taught, that the right teaching produces the right behaviour, that the gap between knowing and doing is closed by better systems.

Readers at the second-purchase stage of the category have noticed that the literature's strategies work in some cases and fail in others, and that the cases where they fail are exactly the cases that matter most — the patterns that resist the technique, the patterns that come back, the patterns that cannot be accounted for. This book names why. The strategies work where behaviour was taught. They fail where behaviour was learned without teaching. That is most of adult behaviour.

The book arrives at the moment when readers have done enough of the popular work to feel its limit. It corrects what the limit reveals. It is the fourth-generation book the category has been quietly waiting for.

Why this author

Paul Roebuck has spent thirty years observing behaviour across a deliberately unusual range of settings. Factory floors. Boardrooms. Therapy rooms. Hospital lecture halls. Mind Gym's training programmes in the early 2000s. Executive coaching engagements across multiple sectors. Clinical psychotherapy practice. A mouth cancer journey in 2017 that calibrated the instrument further. Marriage, family, grandchildren, the end of two parents' lives, the carrying-forward that begins after that.

The unusual range matters because it produces the cross-validation the framework requires. A pattern that shows up in a factory floor in 1978, a boardroom in 2002, a therapy room in 2020, and a cancer ward in 2017 is a pattern. A pattern that shows up only in one of those is a setting.

The author's prior book, *Mind the Gap* (2026), uses the same instrument to observe the gap between AI behaviour and human behaviour. The two books share an observational discipline: stay inside the room, describe what is in the room, do not dress it up, do not strip it down. The new book applies that discipline to the room readers have lived in their whole lives without quite seeing it.

Where this book sits in a five-book ecosystem

Five books, sequenced from public interest inward to clinical specificity, with each step's readership preparing the ground for the next.

First: *Mind the Gap* (2026). The gap between AI behaviour and human behaviour. Establishes the author as the observational instrument and lands on a topic of enormous current public pull.

Second: this book — *All Behaviour Is Learned. Not All Behaviour Is Taught.* (2027). The general-readership book. Expected to reach the widest audience.

Third: *How to Behave* (2027–2028). The applied book — the framework brought into wider behavioural situations, for readers who want the framework named and applied.

Fourth: *Where Does The Shame Go?* (2028 onward). The canonical clinical document for the Shame-Response Continuum. Written for clinicians, executive coaches, and serious students of human protection systems.

Fifth: the NGE-FOF calibration monograph (when the calibration work is complete). The academic-clinical reference for how directional defences vary, intensify, and combine. Years away.

Each book opens a door for the next. The ecosystem is structured. This book is the broadest door — the one most general readers will walk through. The others are rooms they may enter afterwards.

Risks, named honestly

Crowded market. Behaviour-change is one of the most saturated categories in non-fiction. The book stands out only if the title sentence does its work at first contact and the substance delivers on the implicit promise. The defence is the title itself — it does work other titles in the category do not do.

Slide-deck origin. The fifteen-step sequence began life in a 2017 slide deck used in workshops and coaching. Books built from decks often read as expanded PowerPoint. The defence is that the new book's structure is developmental, not topical — the reader walks an arc, not a list. The chapters will not have the cadence of slides.

Framework implicit, not explicit. Some readers may want to meet the framework directly. The book handles this with a single late chapter that names the framework and points to the author's other books. The new book is the door, not the room.

Tone risk. Behaviour-change books slide easily into self-help register. The author's prior book establishes a clinical observational voice; the new book must hold that voice while remaining accessible to general readers who do not arrive with clinical training. The discipline is in the writing.

What this book is not

It is not a self-help book. It does not promise transformation. It does not offer techniques to apply by Friday. The reader who arrives looking for a five-step morning routine will leave disappointed; this is correct.

It is not a memoir. The author's case material appears throughout, but the book is observation, not autobiography. The author is the instrument, not the subject.

It is not a critique of the popular literature. The book takes the popular literature seriously and names what it has added; it then names what it has missed. The register is corrective, not dismissive.

It is not a framework manual. NGE-FOF and the Shame-Response Continuum are present underneath every chapter, but the book does not require the reader to learn the

framework to benefit from the chapter. The reader who wants the framework is pointed to the other books.

The single-sentence claim

The behaviour-change category has been treating learned behaviour as if it were taught behaviour for forty years. This book makes the correction — in the cadence of a clinical aphorism rather than a slogan — and walks the reader through what the correction means for how change actually happens.

What the author is asking the reviewing AI to assess

Three things. First: does the concept have a market? Specifically, does it have a market that has not already been served by the existing fourth-generation books in the category? Second: does the construction — fifteen-step developmental sequence with the framework as substrate — read as structurally coherent, or does it read as a slide-deck pretending to be a book? Third: does the title sentence do the work the author and Claude both believe it does, or is the belief in its power a function of being too close to it?

Push back honestly. The author can take it. The strength of the concept is best tested by an independent reading that is willing to identify weaknesses the author and Claude may have missed.

Provenance and prior work

This concept paper is co-produced by Paul Roebuck (author) and Claude (Anthropic, Claude Opus 4.7) on 24 May 2026, after Claude reviewed Paul's 2017 slide-deck developmental sequence, his current manuscript *Mind the Gap*, his Shame-Response Continuum theory paper (*Where Does The Shame Go?*), and his *Defending the Gap* essay.

The framework underneath the book — NGE-FOF, the directional defences, the Shame-Response Continuum — is the author's clinical work, developed over thirty years of practice. The fifteen-step developmental sequence is the author's training architecture, refined in front of audiences since 2017.

Claude's role in this paper is to articulate the concept clearly for an external reviewing AI — not to author the book. The book's writing will be the author's, by the same working method that produced *Mind the Gap*: substrate and decisions from the author, structural shaping and prose from Claude, final say with the author.

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Framework, sequence, lived experience, final say: Paul Roebuck.

Articulation and structure: Claude AI (Anthropic) — claude-opus-4-7 | 24 May 2026.

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The Tomb Map →