

Editorial**Creativity**

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“Creativity is marked by the ability or power to create—to bring into existence, to invest with a new form, to produce through imaginative skill, to make or bring into existence something new.” Webster dictionary. Creativity may include all the following: originality, imagination, inspiration, vision and inventiveness.

Most developers and economists agree that "creativity" is what would make a difference in the future. Raw material is not going to have great influence on development. Creativity would play the pivotal role. If we go back in history, Henry Ford made a great impact on the economic development of the United States by his own creativity. Dr Flemming of St. Mary's Hospital, London, made a great leap in medicine when he discovered penicillin and many others who made the lives of doctors and patients easier. There is no doubt that a community devoid of creative people is certain to fall back to primitive living and habits. More often, they resort to superstition and delusion to satisfy their needs.

It is a myth that only genius, talented people are creative. A recent study at Exeter University refuted that myth. Researchers examined outstanding performances in the arts, mathematics and sports. The study concludes that excellence is determined by: opportunities, encouragement, training, motivation and above all practise.

Psychologists from the University of Toronto and Harvard University have identified one of the biological bases of creativity. The study was published in the September 2003, issue of the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology showed that the brains of creative people appear to be more open to incoming stimuli from the surrounding environment. Other peoples' brains might shut out this same information through a process called "latent inhibition"¹.

Creativity could be achieved by: seeking to look at things in new ways, valuing new thoughts and ideas, looking for innovative solutions, seeking change, being curious, being willing to take risks to accomplish your vision and seeking continuously to improve everything we do. Typical example is Dr. Kaplan, the great ophthalmologist and accomplished Jazz musician who said, "I quickly lose the satisfaction associated with a task that has been accomplished. Consequently, I usually start looking fairly quickly for the next step,".

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Research revealed that everyone has creative abilities. Through intensive and diverse training, the greater the potential for creative output can be revealed. Diversity is critical to creativity; creativity is at the foundation of invention. It is at the heart of our success to improve medical practice. Radical ideas are not always bad ideas; they might be innovative and might lead to a better radical change.

Most of the creative personalities have reached high levels of achievement in their field by devoting thousands of hours of serious training. Mozart trained for 16 years before he produced an acknowledged masterwork.

Creativity in medicine is essential to:

1. Prophylaxis.
2. Developing new methods of treatment and surgery.
3. Drug development.
4. Discover local diseases, their variants and prognosis.

Medicine is a creative activity. If medicine is to thrive in Bahrain, it must be creative. Success in medicine demands constant innovation. Brainpower is the most valuable resource available for human being. We need to attract talented and creative people because wealth directly flows from them.

Based on the previous assumption, let us look at our medical community. Do we encourage creative people? Or do we punish them? Based on my experience, I feel that creative people in medicine, in our community are rarely celebrated, more often punished, either by ignoring them or giving them administrative posts in order to raise their salaries. Medicine needs special scale for professionals to raise their salaries rather than to put them in ineffectual administrative positions.

In Bahrain medical community, it is quite often that we lavish position and money on people for their names and their loyalty, not their creativity. It is possible to cite many examples, where in the past a non-ethical individual has been put in charge of ethics and a person who has very little knowledge of research was put in charge of research. At the same time great researchers who were researching all their lives and had many publications behind their names had been ignored. This had also afflicted the Bahrain Medical Society where non-researchers have been put in-charge of research evaluation and people who know very little about ethics have been put in charge of ethics.

Contrary to what is practiced in the West, it seems that here the position holders think that creative people are dangerous to their position. In fact, they are a great asset to the position holder and to the community, if they are encouraged. But the position holders would not allow anybody on the scene; they are the heroes and chiefs; all the others have

to be red Indians. It is time to consider abandoning the subculture of domination and ignoring others except thyself.

It is time to change our attitude towards creativity and creative people. We need to conquer the next centuries by encouraging as many creative people as we can in order for our medical community to develop and to give a better service to our patients.

It is hopeful that the newly appointed minister of health, Dr Nada Haffadh, would consider looking after talented and creative professionals on whose shoulders falls the responsibility of developing medicine for the future generations. She herself was creative in her approach of family physician practice, where she organised and improved the ante and post-natal care in the health centres in the most innovative way. She has introduced breast-feeding to improve child and mother health and she was very successful in doing so. She organised vaccination in the health centres and she has never neglected the prevention campaign; in fact, she considers it as important as cure if not more.

Finally, I would like to remind my fellow researchers and potential creative professionals of what is said by the great philosopher Isiah Berlin, " never ask question to which you know the answer"

REFERENCE

1. Carson SH, Perterson JB, Higgins DM. Decreased Latent Inhibition Is Associated With Increased Creative Achievement in High-Functioning Individuals. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2003;85(3). www.apa.org/journals/psp/903tc.html 23/5/2004.

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