CREATIVITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

There is a vast distinction between creative thought and action and merely knowing how to do it.

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That sir, which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack, when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.[1]

IN any organization there will be people who fit this description, as spoken by the Fool in *King Lear*. They are not committed to the future of the organization, but are there because it meets their present need for a job, and money in their pocket.

It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee, and in this
flea, our two bloods mingled bee.[2]

An organization, however, does not want such complete union with the employee as is conjured up in one's mind by this conceit of the 17th century poet John Donne. For vested interests may then become so great that any change becomes a threat. The organization may be rendered as ineffective by those who see their life and job as one, as by individuals who see it only as a necessary evil.

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The above two quotations are from the works of men whose contributions have survived the test of time; they were creative in that their writing shows originality of thought, expression, and form. Creativity has frequently been reserved in its use to refer to the great men in the arts or science when their books, paintings or discoveries received world acclaim.

Creative ability, like most human traits, is found in the population on a continuum. There is some originality in everyone and the ability to produce original ideas can be measured.[3] This was an assumption made by Wilson, Guilford, and Christensen when they set up a battery of tests to measure originality. They "regarded originality in turn as meaning 'uncommon,' 'remote,' and 'clever.' "[4] Five of their seven tests, used to measure originality, showed significant interrelationships.[5] Their findings indicated that there was a factor common to the three definitions, which the authors tentatively named originality.[6] Taylor, discussing creativity, says that to date school grades, traditional intelligent tests, or sheer accumulation of knowledge are not valid measures of creative performance.[7] Thus, The Fool in King Lear was the one who predicted the desertion of the royal supporters. Shakespeare in his works often hides the creative thinker behind the mask of apparent dullness. Donne, on the other hand, liked to shock people by the use of remoteness (the flea and love).

To return to organizations, a company is made up of many individuals; some will work to a satisfactory level, but contribute little in original thought, others will be so anxious for security that they will resist company growth if it means change. Others will see the dangers of both approaches, not only to the company, but also to themselves. For as Beck says, one of the most treasured possessions of the individual is his creativity, and only by guarding it closely can one "control events and . . . avoid being controlled by them in a crushing and toilsome routine."[8]

SECURITY VERSUS CREATIVITY

Beck's words above suggest that you cannot have security without using creative ability. If events are the controlling force in one's life, then one gives up the human rights — to make decisions, to question, and to introduce change. Social organization frequently makes it difficult not to see conflict arising from these two concepts; many individuals see creativity in others as a source of danger to their security as Machiavelli wrote in the early 16th century:

> . . . the reformer has enemies in all those who
> profit by the old order, and only lukewarm de-

fenders in all those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the law in their favour; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have actual experience of it.[9]

The leadership given to a group frequently will determine the direction it will go. An excerpt from a book by Walker and Heyns gives a formula for producing conformity:

Manage to arouse a need or needs that are important to the individual or to the group. Offer a goal which is appropriate to the need or needs. Make sure that conformity is instrumental to the achievement of the goal and that the goal is as large and as certain as possible. Apply the goal or reward at every opportunity.[10]

The result of working in a conformity-bound environment is one that will be avoided by the individual who wants to have a lifetime of growing. As Barzum significantly states it:

If we must all suffer, agree, worry, partake in unison, under pain of reproof, then the world is no longer a stage peopled by distinguished actors, . . . there is only a tribe milling under a tent.[11]

Security without growth shortens the life of the individual, not in years necessarily but in satisfaction in seeing what he can contribute to life; his own, his family's, his friends, society. Parents' satisfaction is increased when they see the child they created grow physically and mentally. The growing child is keenly interested in how tall he is in relation to his friends and excited when he learns or makes something new. Why, then, does this interest in growth often stop? It is a powerful motivator, but it must be seen as a goal that is worthy of attainment and acceptable to others.

Height of individuals in society is on a continuum, thus one individual may be 5'4", another 5'10" and another 6'4". This is also true of creative ability. Not everyone is capable of being the creator of a great work of art, or of being a research scientist. Selye gives an outline of the characteristics of the original thinker, the great scientific discoverer. He states it thus:

The power of original, creative thought, reflects on independent freshness of aspect. By independ-

ence of thought I mean particularly initiative and resourcefulness in taking the introductory step. This, in turn, depends upon imagination, the power to form a conscious idea of something not previously perceived in reality. It requires vision, the discernment and foresight of what is important at a time when importance is not yet obvious.[12]

The individual described by Selye would of necessity be one who was secure within himself, with risk-taking a strong personality trait. That is, he would have to be willing to expose himself to situations with uncertain outcomes. It is of interest that when the faculty of a school of nursing was asked to rank-list the fifteen personality traits measured by the Edwards Personality Preference Schedule, in the order they felt would be desirable traits in graduates of basic baccalaureate program, they ranked fourth "Change — desire for attempting new and different things, and experience of novelty and change."[13] The rank-listing of students' mean scores placed change fourth for seniors and 5.5 for sophomores. Another study done by Smith compared the results of entrance personality tests given to 219 students in a hospital diploma school, who had successfully completed their program, with those of 45 students who left the program before graduation.[14] In this study on the Edwards Personality Preference Schedule "Change" ranked fifth for the successful students and fourth for the unsuccessful students. The other personality test administered to these students was the Cattrell 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire. The unsuccessful students mean score on Q_1, where "a high score indicates radicalism in attitudes and temperament as opposed to conservatism,"[15] was higher than the mean score for the successful students; the significance of the difference between means was at or beyond the .05 level.[16]

Torrance carried out another study in a diploma school of nursing in the United States using the Minnesota Test of Creative Thinking and her results indicated "that nursing education does not necessarily reduce the creativity of its students and eliminate the most creative students."[17]

The researchers in these instances all cautioned against generalizing from their findings, but they do indicate by their areas of study that in nursing there is an interest in reasearching the relationship between security and some factors related to creativity. However, the frequent stress placed on step by step procedures in teaching and practice, servant relationships to doctors and administrators, and autocratic administration should not be discounted as causes for

drop-outs from nursing schools and reasons why some nurses leave nursing in search of jobs where it is easier to grow and where tradition is not as strong a dictator of practice.

DEVELOPMENT

As a person looks about he can see that there is little growth without attention. The plant without water dies, the play without an audience is forgotten, the product without a user disappears from the shelf. Creativity as a potential in all individuals will rarely flourish unless the environment, through the many phrases of life, is conducive to its growth. The child whose parents say, though often only by action, I will love you if you are good, or, do as I say, is being taught conformity, not creativity. If the exploring instinct leads to punishment or loss of love, it is going to be used as a motivator of behavior with greater hesitation. If in school the teacher expects the student to listen, and if examination results depend on how much can be memorized, or if the student can reproduce what he knows the teacher wants, then where is the incentive to try something new? Where is the stimulus to read the book not on the bibliography, to write the paper that is different, to try the experiment just to see what the results may be? In an environment where conformity is rewarded; the knowledge that experimentation is part of learning may take the individual years to discover — for many the realization may never come.

The environment of a school at any level should be evaluated not by the philosophy on paper, but on how it is communicated to and by the teachers. The words of Sir Arthur Currie as quoted by Kidd suggest an environment where stimulation of creative potential would be a primary goal:

> *We do not want you to be the echoers of a thousand platitudes but originators of new and larger ideas . . . The task of education is to make men alive, to send them out alive at more points, alive on higher levels, alive in more effective ways* .[18]

The learner at all points in life must be aware of using his many capabilities, and be anxious to experiment with new and different ways of utilizing them. In his path of discovery he may well initiate something, though small, that will change the pattern of work, play, or living of many others. If, however, he never tries, no one will know what has been lost. This is the intangible part of discovery: if it does not work, many will be anxious to criticize, but if it had not been tried, the fact it would not work would never be known. Yet

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out of the mistake may come another idea that may change many patterns. Development takes time in an environment where there is room to move. A leader can create an environment in which conformity or creativity is fostered. If creativity is accepted as a major motivator to better performance, then an organization should consider these words of Mayer:

> . . . to enable the modern working man to attain high levels of performance together with inner satisfaction, one must create for him in the organization of his work ample space for personal development, possibilities of individual initiative and the self-responsibility and freedom in which he is required and challenged to utilize his knowledge and his ability. It is within this realm that such personal self-realization is developed with an accompanying high level of material production.[19]

In nursing there are many questions that must be answered. Is the education realistic in baccalaureate or diploma schools, realistic in the light of the work environment after graduation? How can we create an environment in the schools and the service area where growth will be seen as a life long process? For example, there is something very wrong, where in the educational setting the student is encouraged to acquire skills in interpersonal relationships and problem-solving techniques, and then finds when she moves into the work environment she is "on medications." It is likely to be a full-time job when done functionally, so her contact with the patients is when she administers the drugs — not before to assess need — not after to assess effect. She is following an order in a system. If she stays in the job because it is convenient, she must give up part of herself, or transfer that part away from the job. Development has reached a turning point and growth through learning endangered.

The answer to the challenge of how to promote growth of employees is not simple. Some nursing departments may find the answer if they are willing to experiment, some may have answers thrust upon them from outside, and others because of fear of change will continue to impede the growth of those who come to them for employment.

CREATIVE PROCESS

Crosby suggests four steps that are involved in the creative process: preparation, incubation, illumination, verification.[20] Preparation involves recognizing that there is a problem, setting limits, and

gathering information.[21] The danger at this point is to look for a solution in the context of familiar patterns; the creative thinker will look for analogies.[22] Incubation is that period when no solution seems evident, or no line of attack open. Then the thinker goes off about some other business and suddenly a solution, method of attack, or partial solution presents itself.[23] Illumination is "the object of all preceding effort in the crucial event which has been called illumination or insight."[24] Verification is when the evaluation of the solution is carried out by the creator and his colleagues.[25] De Bono in a description of what he calls lateral versus vertical thinking suggests many of the same ideas. He describes vertical thinking as digging the same hole deeper.[26] This is similar to Crosby's warning associated with looking to familiar patterns for solutions to new problems. Lateral thinking, on the other hand, is similar to the idea of looking for analogies, for "lateral thinking is thinking sideways: not developing a pattern but restructuring a pattern."[27] However, de Bono strongly disagrees with the idea that creative thinking necessarily follows steps, but believes rather that it "proceeds by any means whatsoever, so long as change is brought about."[28] The creative process is more than problem solving; while in many instances progress toward change is facilitated by following a pattern, creativity implies freedom from conformity. The creative idea may well come before the problem is recognized; still the organization will be better for it.

De Bono throughout his article stays away from the use of the word creative and gives the following reason:

> *I have deliberately avoided using the word 'creativity' in connection with lateral thinking because I think it too glibly fashionable.*[29]

This is a warning about the pedantic trap similar to the warning of an educator who says:

> *Teaching only facts is beginning to have a pernicious sort of connotation in the minds of some of our highly-placed Canadian educators these days, so they use high-sounding words instead of 'facts', words like understanding generalization, concepts, or even principles.*[30]

This is no different than the trap created by fear; the fear that prevents people from being themselves willing to admit their own leanings and beliefs. As a nurse educator says:

> *With constant emphasis being placed on democra-*

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*tic values in all administrative literature, hardly
an administrative literature, hardly an administra-
tor, and certainly not a nurse administrator, dares
to admit to autocratic leanings.*[31]

Creativity, principles, democracy are only words; what they mean
can be found in the dictionary; interpretation of them appears in the
literature of many disciplines. The environment where they can be
behaviorally implemented must be created by people.

SUMMARY

Creativity is a potential of each individual, but this does not mean
everyone can create or discover something that will receive world
acclaim. This is not the goal the organization should expect. The
responsibility, however, of parents, schools, businesses, and society
is to encourage the growth of natural experimental instinct.

> *When leadership can give equal consideration to
> ideas in conflict as to ideas in accord, propagators
> of ideas will become self-directed and self-respon-
> sible. Then leadership becomes an inventive pro-
> cess, rather than a directive one, and encourages
> the worker to evaluate his ideas so that ideas
> have a sense of timeliness and purpose.*[32]

The responsibilityof nursing leaders is to create an environment
where the neophytes and practitioners can grow to their full potential
as individuals. They must encourage the development of problem-
solving skills so that self education continues as a life-time goal. They
must communicate verbally and nonverbally their acceptance of
change. If the environment is one where new approaches are dis-
cussed, tried, and evaluated, needed changes will be made and ac-
cepted.

In this atmosphere there will be less stress placed on knowing
"how-to-do-things" and more on understanding and adapting to meet
the individuality of situations. Hilliard puts the question of creativity
to nurses in this way:

> *The artist can elect to work on a numbered paint-
> ing. This will not tax his creative energies; yet he
> will end up with a finished picture. Or he may
> choose to do an original oil. He will paint, stand
> back and assess, add color here and subdue a
> shadow there. When he is finished, he will be able*

> *to say, 'Here is an original work.' But with the
> numbered painting, he can only say, "I've done this
> according to a preconceived pattern and it is pass-
> able.'*[33]

She follows this picture by asking, does the patient not deserve the "oil painting" approach? In many hospitals the "numbers" approach is often the case. Nursing must ask why. It is not good enough to say there is a shortage of nurses, that nurses are required to spend too much time on non-nursing duties, or that institutions require conformity. The individual nurses must be encouraged to be responsible for expressing their views without fear, and helped to see that to keep their own originality, they must guard the right to provide creative care for patients.

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