

INNOVATION

We had the privilege and pleasure of working closely with Dr. Leland Kaiser and his family through Memorial Hermann Healthcare System's Spiritual Leadership Institute for a number of years. Innovation is critical to success in any business so we want to share some of Dr. Kaiser's thoughts on this topic with you. We believe you will find his insights to be very thoughtful and helpful.



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BRIEF ESSAY ON INNOVATION

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Break-through innovation occurs when the innovator's mind leaps forward in time and thinks thoughts well in advance of their period of natural unfoldment in human evolution. Most people think thoughts behind time and are bound to their past or they think thoughts in time and are arrested in the present. The innovator thinks thoughts ahead of time and sees what will be or at least what could be in the course of human affairs.

The innovator hears the Nothing crying-out to become Something (Boehm). The innovator helps things become what they already are in latency but have not yet become in manifestation. The innovator knows that the end is always in the beginning; yet its release must be achieved by someone who can hear its cry and facilitate its emergence.

Bohm, a quantum physicist discusses the implicate order of things - how they are wound in upon themselves and slowly unwind through time. Piaget and other developmental theorists discuss the stages of development people pass through as they grow from infancy into adulthood. Inherent in all developmental theories is the notion of an essential nature unfolding through time.

Innovation and discovery bring things to us faster than they would arrive in their normal course of development. The innovator speeds up evolution by accelerating a thing's natural rate of unfoldment. The next time you are thinking about a healthcare facility, service or product – ask yourself, "What will this thing look like in its next stage of development?" or ask "If this thing was much better than it is now, how would it be?" Your mind, if given the opportunity, will extrapolate, fill-in and enrich anything it entertains. Try out this little exercise on your self. If you were better than you are now, what would you be?" Use time expansion to incubate the potential of anything you behold. Your question is not, "what was it?", or "what is it?", but rather, what will it become?"

Let us try another mind experiment. Imagine it is ten years from now. You are a journalist writing a story. You are walking down the street toward your hospital. Tour your hospital and describe everything you see. Since the future of your hospital exists now as a high probability event in

future time, you may be able to grasp a glimmer of it before it happens. This exercise takes you beyond the limits of ego or conscious mind and provides an invitation to your unconscious mind or superconscious mind to participate in scenario building.

Precognition occurs when the mind jumps forward in time. Since we seldom ask the mind to do this, it happens infrequently. Whatever scenario you produce, remember it is only one alternative future among many that could just as well happen. The function of the innovator is not only to predict the future but also to make it happen. When an innovator senses what could be, he may decide to make it happen. An innovator is a future predictor and then a future maker.

The scope of innovation may be limited to the development of a new tool or technique or it may involve the reconstruction of a total society. The scope may vary but the process is always the same.

Most innovators maintain a small circle of friends and acquaintances who think along similar lines and share common interests. The innovator stimulates the thinking of the other members of the circle and is in turn stimulated by them. Innovation becomes a shared interest and a group activity. Ask yourself the question, "who stimulates my thinking?" If you are a careful observer of your own mentation, you will notice that some people stimulate your thinking and other people depress it. Whenever you are in the presence of another, there is a subtle energy exchange. When there is mental resonance, ideas flash back and forth at very high rates of transfer. Two thinkers in-sync, piggyback on each others ideas and generate composite mental creations beyond the reach of either person thinking alone. A circle of thinkers builds energy and permits high levels of synthetic creation.

Your creativity is affected by the books you read and the friends you keep. Mentors with a larger circle of consciousness than you possess will pull you into their expanded mental orbits. Acquaintances with a smaller ring will attempt to reduce you and your thinking to fit their restricted conception of the world.

We need to build a personal innovation space peopled by those who expand and stimulate our innate creative abilities. Matchmaking is the name of the game in innovation. Who in the universe is carrying the other piece of the puzzle you carry? If you can meet him, the key will fit the lock and creation will pour forth. We all depend upon others in our own process of self development. We all carry the key for another and in turn are a lock waiting for the key of another.

Sometimes the creative juices are ready and flowing. Other times they must be stimulated. Writing and speaking are two methods of priming the pump. Writers with word processors have noted an interesting phenomenon. If they sit down and start writing, even filling the screen with free associations or meaningless phrases, the creative process will often be activated. You can put yourself in the mood for innovation by just starting. Write down what you know and what you would like to know. As you begin the process of expression, new ideas will rush into your head. A blank piece of paper is an invitation to participate in a boundless universe. One thing always leads to another and eventually something of significance will happen. The discipline of writing at the same time each day will condition the mind to begin producing when you sit down. Explaining some of your ideas to other people, clarifies them in your own mind and often leads you into new directions as you listen to yourself and hear yourself saying things you really didn't know you knew. When you express what you know, your well is pumped dry and is made ready for refilling. Expression often precedes innovation rather than following it.

Your self image is self fulfilling. If you view yourself as a non-innovator you are unlikely to innovate. We program ourselves with our beliefs and expectations. Try the following exercises: (1) write a short essay on yourself as an innovator, (2) remember and record all the creative, things you have done in your lifetime, (3) read some books and articles on innovation, (4) develop friendships with innovators, (5) spend some time each day free associating to the things in the world you would like to see changed, (6) tell yourself each night you will have creative dreams, (7) in your mind's eye imagine yourself as a successful innovator in your organization. To your surprise, if you do these exercises, your self concept will be altered and innovative ideas

will begin to appear in your consciousness. Self concept is a powerful shaper of destiny. Often childhood experiences convince us early in life that we are not innovative. As a result we never try to create.