

Training and making of a surgeon - with the mind and not the eye !!

Dr. Chintamani

Training as a surgeon is the most exciting and happening part of a surgeon's story. The journey, that is surgery, makes surgeon and his job very special and unique. To trace it back to the days when surgery was considered the "queen" of all specializations in medicine and "surgeon" the gentleman with the heart of a lion and eyes of a hawk, training has undergone a drastic but not necessarily a positive change. There is an interesting Chinese story that in a way sums up the essence of training as a surgeon. With more and more industry driven and technology dependent "developments" happening, surgery has become more and more complicated and we have made simple things more cumbersome. The surgeons today see more with their eyes rather than with their minds.

The story of a Chinese emperor and his cook has been around for some time and has been used for explaining the significance of seeing with the mind. The emperor was looking down from his sitting room in to the courtyard where his cook was busy chopping a bullock for the dinner. Each stroke appeared calculated and meticulous, the axe finding the crevices and spaces in between the joints with ease, perfection and finesse. The entire exercise was appearing like a well co-ordinated orchestra producing a soothing symphony. The emperor was very thrilled and impressed and called for the cook. The cook was very scared and flabbergasted to face the emperor for the first time in his life.

What makes you chop the bullock with such perfection, and with the ease of a master? The cook narrated his story, great emperor! When I started learning this art at the feet of my father, it I would see bullocks all around and would change my axe every three days. Gradually, as my learning continued I started seeing just the bullock and would change my axe once in two or three months. With the passing weeks I did not even have to look at

the bullock and would find the crevices with ease and my axe would be changed annually. Now I do not see the bullock at all and would find the boneless planes without discomfort, I do not have to see the bullock with my eyes anymore and this axe has been with me for more than a decade. I now see with my mind and not the eye.

There is no short cut to making of a surgeon; the mentor and the mentee have to be in close and selfless spiritual and professional contact for an optimum duration. Both have to excel and work for each other's excellence. Does not matter how far we go in creating a robot slave, human beings and human values only, would make a surgeon. "A fool with a tool is still a fool". It has been amply demonstrated in many studies that the evolution of gadgetteries have only made a mediocre surgeon appear acceptable, excellence still rules and would do so in future too. To excel is the true freedom that we all strive for, knowingly and unknowingly and a great achiever is known not by where he has reached but the obstacles he has overcome. Hard work therefore is the key to excellence and training of a surgeon should take him from eyes to the mind.

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