Learn, Unlearn and Relearn

Constant updating is the characteristic feature of professional education. That is the reason for making professional advancement programmes mandatory for the dental professionals. Continuing education widens the mental horizon, changes the perceptions and expands the overall intellectual base. Continuous learning can be considered as an exercise to the mind as is physical exercise to the body. The secret of learning new things lies in the willingness to unlearn old practices even if they have brought huge success in the past. Unlearning is an essential component in the learning process which helps you to become open to new skills, experiences, behaviors and knowledge. Although one cannot physiologically unlearn anything or erase the existing neural pathways, you can create the equivalent of a mental attic with an attitude that I no longer practice those techniques. In order to learn a new skill, even if it’s similar to something which you already practise, try to explore and find out what makes it different. All of us derive pleasure or rather find it convenient to repeat things that worked in the past. Unfortunately we fail to perceive the fact that many of the old practices do not find a relevant application at present. This does not mean that repetition of old practice is a bad strategy. When there is a significant difference between the old and the new practices and the new practice very progressive; sticking on to the old method might hold you back from the futuristic path. Here we are reminded of the words of Alvin Toffler - “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

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