



HERE'S TO THE CRAZY ONES

The famous “1984” commercial is regarded as one of the greatest advertisements of all time. It helped put Apple on the map. While I can respect the disruptive spirit of “1984,” I personally prefer Apple’s “Here’s to the Crazy Ones” commercial.

First airing in 1997, it features black-and-white footage of iconic personalities such as Albert Einstein, Muhammad Ali, Amelia Earhart, and Pablo Picasso. Narrated by Richard Dreyfuss, it starts, “Here’s to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers.” It goes on to celebrate these shit disturbers (as we say in Canada) as the people who pushed humanity forward, the ones who changed the world.

As an outspoken, long-haired brown guy trying to figure out his place in ophthalmology, this commercial spoke to me. It was only when I started to have some success, and saw what it took to achieve it, that I realized the true brilliance of this ad.

The people featured in the ad had incredible talent. I did not; there was nothing special about my skills that would guarantee my success. What did end up bringing me success was challenging the status quo. I would ask, “Why?” And if

the answer was, “That’s just how it’s done,” I wouldn’t accept it. I would push to make it better, any way I could.

I saw so many of my peers looking at things through the same lens, and it was blinding their ability to innovate. I realized that if I wanted to change ophthalmology, I didn’t need to be talented. I just needed to think differently. That was the real brilliance of the ad, by the way. It introduced the greatest tagline ever written: “Think different.”

So much of what we see as brilliant is not. It’s just people being brave enough to question conventional wisdom. Fittingly, this describes Steve Jobs. The man who revolutionized computers never wrote a line of code in his life. He just thought differently about how people wanted to interact with technology. At a time when everyone was focused on the fastest processors, he focused on user experience.

At a time when the brightest engineers were convinced that electric cars would never be feasible without larger, more powerful batteries, Elon Musk decided to take a whole bunch of existing batteries and stick them together. Then Tesla was born.

Quarterback Fran Tarkenton was considered

brilliant for introducing *scrambling* to the NFL. Before him, quarterbacks didn’t try to slip away from sacks. It took 40 years for someone to realize that, when a 300-pound man is trying to tackle you, you should run away. Really?

Of course, for every success like these, there are a thousand failures. It sure felt like that for me, anyway. But no matter how bitter those defeats, the taste of one victory made it all worthwhile.

Our focus in this issue of *GT* is innovations in glaucoma treatment. We are seeing some incredible breakthroughs coming to our field, but we can’t rely solely on technology for innovations.

As doctors, we are taught that education and training will make us smarter and more innovative. I think it’s an ability to step back from our training and see things through fresh eyes that actually drives our craft forward. A chip on your shoulder and an openness to failing don’t hurt either. Long hair is optional. ■

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