

## 京大過去問 2008年 第2問

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I am often asked, “What did you gain from your psychiatric training? Was it profitable for your career as a neural scientist?”

I am always surprised by such questions, for it is clear to me that my training in psychiatry and my interest in psychoanalysis lie at the very core of my scientific thinking. They have provided me with a perspective on behavior that has influenced almost every aspect of my work. Had I skipped residency training and gone to France earlier to also spend time in a molecular biology laboratory, I might have worked on the molecular biology of gene regulation in the brain at a slightly earlier point in my career. (1)But the overarching ideas that have influenced my work and fueled my interest in conscious and unconscious memory derive from a perspective on mind that psychiatry and psychoanalysis opened up for me. Thus, my initial career as an aspiring psychoanalyst was hardly a detour from the main path; rather, it was the educational bedrock of all I have been able to accomplish since.

Often, newly graduating medical students who want to do research ask me whether they should take more basic coursework or go into research right away. I always urge them to get into a good laboratory. Obviously, coursework is important — I continued to take courses throughout my years at the National Institute of Mental Health, and I continue to this day to learn from seminars and meetings, from my colleagues, and from students. But it is much more meaningful and enjoyable to read the scientific literature about experiments you are involved in yourself than to read about science in the abstract.

Few things are more exciting and stimulating to the imagination than making a new finding, no matter how modest. (2)A new finding allows one to see for the first time a part of nature — a small piece of the puzzle of how something functions. Once I have gotten into a problem, I find it extremely helpful to get a complete perspective, to learn what earlier scientists thought about it. I want to see not only what lines of thought proved to be productive, but also where and why certain other directions proved to be unproductive. So I was very much influenced by the psychology of Freud and by the early workers in the field of learning and memory. Their thinking, and even their errors, provided a wonderfully rich cultural background for my later work.

I also think it is important to be bold, to tackle difficult problems, especially those that appear initially to be messy and unstructured. (3)One should not be afraid to try new things, such as moving from one field to another or working at the boundaries of different disciplines, for it is at

the borders that some of the most interesting problems reside. Working scientists are constantly learning undiscovered things and are not inhibited from venturing into a new area because it is unfamiliar. They follow their interests instinctively and teach themselves the necessary science as they go along. Nothing is more stimulating for self-education than working in an unexplored area. I had no useful preparation for science before I began with Grundfest and Purpura; I knew very little biochemistry when I joined forces with Jimmy Schwartz; and I knew nothing about molecular genetics when Richard Axel and I began to collaborate. In each case, trying new things proved anxiety-provoking but also exhilarating. It is better to lose some years trying something new and fundamental than to carry out routine experiments that everyone else is doing and that others could do as well as you.

From IN SEARCH OF MEMORY: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SCIENCE OF MIND by Eric Kandel.