**We become what we do**

**When artificial intelligence (AI) is on its way, our ability to reason, analyse and think becomes ever more important.**

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I have borrowed the words in the ti­tle of today’s article from the ancient Greek philosopher and polymath Ar­istotle (384-322 BC). He said that we are, or become, what we repeatedly do. That would also imply that we learn to do something and then continue doing it without much thinking and reflection, espe­cially in art, music, sports, voca­tional, and other practical fields. Aristotle thought that ethics is not something theoretical, it is some­thing practical, and it is something that we must implement for it to become real for ourselves, the community around us, and beyond. To behave ethically is a demand on us all, and we must always strive to do what is good and right, and the more we focus and practice it, the better we become at it.

There is a Russian proverb that says that repetition is the mother of learn­ing. Obviously, you may say, but what we must still focus on it, yes, precise­ly therefore; what is true and right can­not be said too often. If we think, say, and do what is good, the world will in­deed become better, little by little. In last week’s article I drew attention to that, simply that if we praise someone for do­ing what is good and right, they will do more of it. As Aristotle said, we will be­come what we repeatedly do. Let me even be more concrete, namely refer to one of the world’s very best soccer foot­ball players, Erling Braut Haaland (23), a Norwegian playing for Manchester City in the UK. On a BBC TV clip, he says that when there is something he likes to do, he likes to do it again and again, becom­ing better and better at it.

[UN passes resolution promoting safe, secure AI for sustainable development](https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Mar-2024/un-passes-resolution-promoting-safe-secure-ai-for-sustainable-development)

When I was a young student, we were made aware of the importance of asking questions and looking for answers, even in fields where there were no definite and clear-cut conclusions, but where new questions would keep arising. It became important for us to understand that sim­ple facts and empirical data, such as sta­tistics and other measurable information would not be enough to give the broader answers. Without reasoning and discuss­ing, also presenting opposing and contra­dicting views to our own, we would not be on the way to finding answers.

In our time and age, with so much data and information available, and when artificial intelligence (AI) is on its way, our ability to reason, analyse and think becomes ever more important. We must watch out for the simplicity of AI solutions. To find good answers and new ways ahead, it is not enough to have a lot of data and information, it is a matter of how we combine it all, de­bate, and reason. This can only be done by people, not by machines, although they can be of help.

[CCPO reviews women, children related cases](https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Mar-2024/ccpo-reviews-women-children-related-cases)

In the future, we will not need to learn all kinds of things, which we can easily and more accurately look up on the In­ternet, and easier it will become with AI. That means that a learned person in the future will not be somebody who knows everything, having learned things by heart. But nowadays we can look up en­cyclopedia information on the comput­er, maybe even in a real old-fashioned book. A learned and wise person will be someone who knows enough to be able to ask the right questions and be criti­cal to what he or she finds on the com­puter or a book, or see on TV and other sources. It will be important to combine the information logically, depending on what we want to use it for.

The new education and training will be to gain skills to be able to collect, evalu­ate, and combine information, come up with new solutions, and be able to use the knowledge. In many ways, I am sur­prised that schools and universities have not moved faster in this direction, at the same time as we know it is indeed com­ing, as we begin to realize with AI. But at school, we are still stuck in learning for traditional tests and exams. Yet, we al­ready know that the future working life will be very different from what it is to­day. Hence, education and training will soon be quite different from what it is to­day, but schools and universities seem to be conservative and stuck in old ways. If it is true that we become what we do, as I stress in this article, then we must turn around and learn differently.

[Punjab govt releases Rs1.6b for free school books](https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Mar-2024/punjab-govt-releases-rs1-6b-for-free-school-books)

Now then, I would like to draw atten­tion to a mental disorder that can also be a blessing (as many disorders can be). There are some people with a particular disorder who are good examples of re­peating things to become masters, focus­ing on one field or a set of fields. Psychol­ogists say that people with the disorder Asperger Syndrome, also called the ‘dis­order of the genius’, focus on a limited number of issues and become experts on those, perhaps not because they choose to do so, but because it is how their brain is made and make them behave. It was first described by an Austrian physician Hans Asperger in 1944. The disorder is related to Autism, and in severe forms, it becomes an illness rather than a dis­order. People with Asperger’s special­ize in and become very clever in the is­sues they are interested in, or rather, they become over-interested in and ob­sessed with certain things to such a de­gree that they miss out on learning and practicing other things. Social skills must be learned rather than being developed naturally. People with Asperger’s focus intensely on certain things, and become geniuses in those fields, missing out on, them and becoming amateurs or handi­capped in many other fields. Even with­out Asperger Syndrome, we all become a bit like that if we are too interested in something, neglecting other things and people, even our nearest and dearest.

[Afforestation is a profitable investment: Asma Naz Abbasi](https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Mar-2024/afforestation-is-a-profitable-investment-asma-naz-abbasi)

In today’s article, I stress that we should repeat and become specialists in some fields, without necessarily overdo­ing it, which is what people with Asperg­er’s so easily do. At the same time, with­out such people, many of the inventions and discoveries in the world would not have been made, because I believe that many outstanding people have such dis­orders, including Elon Musk in Tes­la, Bill Gates in Microsoft, Albert Ein­stein in the sciences, Magnus Carlsen in chess, and so many others. The rest of us may not have an obsession with fo­cusing on one or a few things; rather we may become too broad and multifaceted in our interests – like the ‘polymath’ Ar­istotle. In the future, our education sys­tems should precisely teach us to be­come broad and wide in reasoning and considering issues, with tools and meth­ods for it. Those with the ‘disorder of the genius’, and other specialists, assist­ed by AI and other computer technol­ogy, and more, can help us in it all. But common sense must always be included. The more we realize that and practice it, the better we become at it. We become what we do, certainly not one-eyed com­puter-like geniuses, but good ordinary, clever, and conscientious people who do our best, again and again.

[Saplings planted to mark International Day of Forests](https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Mar-2024/saplings-planted-to-mark-international-day-of-forests)

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