

Are Creativity and Mental Illness Linked?

Creativity and Mental Illness

The founder of American Psychiatry who also signed the US Constitution, Benjamin Rush, made an interesting observation:



From a part of the brain preternaturally elevated, but not diseased, the mind sometimes discovers not only unusual strengths and acuteness, but certain talents it never exhibited before.

Many of the poets, musicians, painters, and other creative people who were or are leaders in their field suffered from some form of mental illness. Scientists have found a connection between genius and mental illness. They have discovered that many people who are exceptionally creative also have a mental illness but scientists have so far failed to find an explanation for the link.

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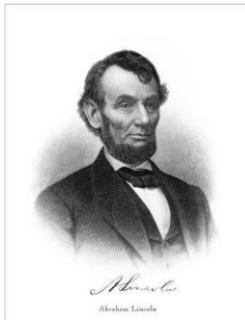


Many famous people who have excelled in their field had some form of mental illness. For example, Syd Barrett, Abraham Lincoln, and Vincent Van Gogh all suffered from mental illness.

Syd Barrett is believed to have suffered from schizophrenia. He wrote songs and played the guitar for the famous rock band, Pink Floyd. In 1968 he quit the band. He also engaged in heavy drug use. He isolated himself from people and he disliked anyone mentioning his association with Pink Floyd.



Abraham Lincoln who was the 16th President of the United States experienced very “severe and debilitating and on occasion suicidal depressions.” Abraham had written a letter and stated within: “...let it be observed, it is a misfortune, not a fault.” He was totally determined to get the upper hand and overcome his obstacles. Despite his serious mental illness he was still able to achieve great things for the country of which he was elected to be President.



Vincent Van Gogh, a great painter and artist suffered from depression and manic episodes and he also experienced epileptic seizures. After his death, people tried to make a diagnosis by examining his personal letters but without success. Vincent took his life at the age of 37.



The theory that creativity and mental illness are connected goes way back to the times of Aristotle who observed that great artists, philosophers, politicians, and poets have shown “melancholia” (his term for mental illness).

Researchers believe that creativity is not due to mental illness nor is mental illness caused by creativity but for some unknown reason there is a connection. Research is continuing with the hope of discovering the reasons why mental illness and creativity are connected.

By Tony Legere


Mentally Healthy People in a Healthy Society

 CANADIAN MENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE
KINGS COUNTY BRANCH

Annual General Meeting

**The Canadian Mental
Health Association Kings
Branch**

**Will be holding an AGM
On June 5th, 2012
At 7:00 pm**

**St. James Anglican Church
Lower Hall
18 Prospect Ave
Kentville, NS**

**Everyone is welcome to
attend
Membership is \$5.00**

References:

“Creativity and Mental Illness.” BPhoenix. 15 April 2012.
<<http://www.angelfire.com/home/bphoenix1/creativity.html>>

“The Mad Gene: Creativity and Mental Illness.” serendip. 8 January 2008. 15 April 2012.
<<http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/exchange/node/1772>>

“Famous People with Schizophrenia.” Disabled World 15 April 2008. 23 April 2012.
<<http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/famous-schizophrenia.shtml>>

Summer Dusk at Kingsport Beach

Tide half out, mud half in,
houses clinging, cliffs crumbling
down a vertigo coast.
On a wide mud beach
I peer at the distant water
taunting me
to remove my shoes,
socks and the day's heat,
toes wiggling free to burrow
red sand trickling between like
time measured without a glass.

Cloud streaks on barren sky garnished by
flashing silver like a coin in a magician's hand,
now there, now gone,
the sandpiper's flight, wing to wing free fall,
teasing land, spiraling high to disappear
leaving empty mirages in a shipless wake.

Evening sky lets down a dark
quiet void like the stillness following
the last flash of a fireworks display
leaving beachcombers to grit home
in shoes over red sandpaper feet,
hearts wrapped in silken imagery.

Heather Frenette



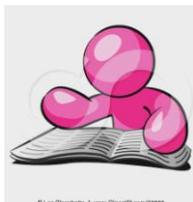
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Avoiding Scams

Every year, Canadians lose millions of dollars to the activities of scammers who bombard us with online, mail, door-to-door and telephone scams.

-Little Black Book of Scams

Most of us would like to earn more money but how do we know whether it's a scam or not? "Fake lotteries, Internet frauds, get-rich-quick schemes and miracle health cures are some of the favoured means of separating the unwary from their money" (p. 1). The Canadian government has published *A Little Black Book of Scams, Your Guide to Protection Against Fraud* to help us out. Here are a few tips to avoid being a victim of a scam:

- Always get independent advice if an offer involves money, personal information, time and/or commitment.
- Beware of guaranteed get-rich-quick schemes as sometimes the only people that benefit are the scammers.
- Don't agree to offers or deals right away. If you think you have a great opportunity, insist on time to get independent advice before making a decision.
- Don't hand over money or personal information or sign anything until you have done your homework and checked the credentials of the company that you are dealing with.
- Never send money or give credit card or bank account details to someone you do not know or trust.

If you think you have spotted a scam or have been scammed, get help! Contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, the Competition Bureau or your local police for assistance.

For more info on scams, go to
<http://competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/03074.html>

By Melinda Cadarette





Luncheon & Awards Ceremony
Tuesday, May 8th, 2012
Pier 21 – 1055 Marginal Road, Halifax
11:30am - 1:30pm

Our own Heather Frenette, editor of **A Mental Health Perspective**, will be receiving an '**Inspiring Lives Award**' during the *Inspiring Lives Awards Luncheon & Awards Ceremony* on May 8th, 2012. Each spring during Mental Health Awareness Week, the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia along with the Canadian Mental Health Association (Nova Scotia Division), present the **Inspiring Lives Awards**, recognizing the achievements of Nova Scotians who have encouraged others as they face their own struggles with mental illness and addiction.

As *Inspiring Lives* Awards recipients, these outstanding individuals have overcome the obstacles of living with their mental illness and now serve as mental health champions in their communities. Through their recovery process, each award recipient helps to inspire the lives of others by ...

- actively promoting good mental health in their community
- supporting their peers
- participating and encouraging others to join in activities to reduce stigma surrounding mental illness

We congratulate Heather for this achievement and recognition. Bravo, Heather.

By Laurel Taylor
CMHA Staff

To order a ticket, go to

<http://www.mentalhealthns.ca/en/home/liveschange/inspiringlivesawards/tickets.aspx>

A Mental Health Perspective Mission Statement:

The purpose of this newsletter is to bring faith, hope and courage to members of the local mental health community of Kings County, Nova Scotia, as well as others who are involved with a mental, emotional or psychological condition.

Donations to support this newsletter and other important programs and services can be made To CMHA Kings County, Suite 3, 11 Opportunity Lane, Coldbrook, P.O. Box 894, Kentville, NS, B4N 4H8. (Cheque or money order will be accepted).

Staff & Volunteers

Editor: Heather Frenette Writers: Tony Legere and Melinda Cadarette
Printing and Distribution: Laurel Taylor, James Taylor and Heather Frenette

We also thank Terry Hebb, Michelle Ferdinand, and Laurel Taylor for their help.

