The tales of a delinquent university student • Where are you in the game?
Emotional Intelligence: The other kind of smart • Και τώρα τί;
“Mind the Mind” • Epigenetic mark: A second DNA ID? • The path will reveal itself
So many months have gone by since the previous publication of UNIQUE. Yet here we are again! A fruitful, flourished, honeyed and passionate new academic year; where we have all remarked an unforgettable journey once again within our university studies. Experiences, thoughts, ideas and words have been exchanged throughout this never ending journey, and have yet to be expressed. Several of us may feel they have still the urge to express some sort of emotion, whether it is something that is bothering us internally in our hearts, or something that gives us strength, love and courage to carry on.

A word of advice: Speak up, whether it is through the echo of your voice, or through the creativity of your writing. To be able to express oneself, printing emotions and thoughts down on paper is truly a magical art. Such talents need to be praised, for a parchment of paper never loses its worth. It doesn’t matter how many words are engraved on the page; it will always have a strong emotion behind it; it will always have its own history and memories orbiting around it.

‘Writing is the painting of the voice’ as Voltaire once said, and likewise we urge you to read this magazine as a painting filled with colours and glitters of each student’s powerful mind. Students from different cultures, different programmes of study and different perspectives have gathered to make the new edition of UNIQUE special in their own vibrant way. Whether it is an experience, or an idea, it takes a lot of skill and patience to fill out an empty page of your own blueprint.

Thank you, and enjoy!

P.s. We hope to read your own ‘paintings’ someday too.

Yiolanda Theophanidou and Nayia Tsiakouri
Campus Life

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Saturday. It was way past noon, the sun rested in mid-air like a blazing charcoal; and yet he was still sleeping. There had been a welcome party at the University that had roared on way into the early hours of Saturday. So, he slept, snoring violently, betraying a musky, smelly breath of whiskey and cigarettes — a vain attempt to cure a fatal hangover. It was the beginning of a new academic year, a new semester, and he had promised himself that he would change his way of life. He had promised himself that as a fifth-year student, he would try to lead a responsible lifestyle this time around. This time around, he had written down his resolutions and stuck the piece of paper on his study desk like the Ten Commandments. The piece of paper had the following:

1. Don’t Start Writing Assignments a day before they are due – start working on them as soon as they are assigned to you
2. Start studying all your courses from the first week of lectures – don’t wait until midterm exams are a week away
3. Don’t go out every weekend spending money on booze, clubs and restaurants – your father is not a billionaire
4. Eat healthy and start going to the gym this year – instant noodles and baked beans are not healthy meals.
5. Attend lectures regularly – this is University not a holiday

You see, to understand why George felt the need to write down these rules for himself, one must understand the lifestyle he lived at University during the previous years. Each semester for George was a rollercoaster, which began in a rather high-spirited fashion and ended on a rather sad and regretful note. It would commence with a series of thrifty wild parties and outings which would keep him away from a couple of lectures. Procrastination was the norm. Six weeks down the semester, George would be faced with three assignments due, four midterm exams and a dozen lectures to catch up on. The situation would be made worse because only €3 remained in his bank account — the bank was kind enough to send a letter on the breakdown of how he used his debit card within the last month — he had spent 56% of his money on restaurants, bars and clubs. On one hand, a club downtown blacklisted him after the embarrassing dra-
ma he had staged while intoxicated while on the other, his mother won’t pick up his phone calls because experience has made her wiser now, she knows six weeks into the semes-ter George is usually broke and trying to ask for more money.

A little more than four years ago, George and his friend, Hector were enrolled for a bachelor in International Relations at the University. Now, Hector had not only graduated, but had commenced his postgraduate studies at the same University. Naturally, George’s mother queried why Hector, who had begun the same degree with her son had graduated and yet her own son still required an additional academic year. She learnt, rather tragically, that George had failed some of the core courses required for one to graduate and still needed to retake them before he qualifies for graduation. So, out of frustration and sheer disappointment, George’s mother sent him the following text message:

“George, you need to understand that you are not a child anymore. At your age, your father and I were already working to raise you and your brother. Your peers are busy graduating creating all sorts of achievements while we bail you out of your foolish mistakes. Act like an adult for once. If you don’t graduate by the end of this year, you are coming back home to live at your grandfather’s village herding goats and sheep. We cannot continue wasting thousands of pounds from our savings on you anymore. We’ve got our own lives to live, George.”

This message served as a wakeup call for George. His mother had always been patient with him, but he realized her patience had reached its limits. He had exactly one academic year to sort his life out. So, it is precisely this mess that George was trying to avoid when he wrote that note to himself.

It is not unreasonable for anyone spectating George’s life on campus from a bird’s eye to dismiss him as an average, banal University student with utterly no ambition or any sense of aspiration. Quite the contrary - George was an intelligent young lad with an impeccable sense of humor who had, unfortunately, made humor, frivolity and the pursuit of pleasure integral aspects of his life’s blueprint. In fact, it was George’s trademark to make a remarkable impression purely out of wit and humor. For example, two years ago, George walked into a Sociology lecture with a plastic tinted flask which everyone assumed contained water, or coffee but in fact, had a homemade cocktail of hot coffee, cream, syrup and Irish whiskey. This was after he had convinced himself that a Monday morning hangover is best treated by a dash of more alcohol. He chose his usual spot at the far end of the amphitheater where he had nurtured the habit of scrolling through Facebook pages inattentively with-
out attracting the lecturer’s dissatisfaction. But George’s hangover was greater than his motivation to sit through this three-hour lecture – so he fell asleep five minutes after the lecturer began talking. And that was not his only miscalculation, the coffee and whiskey cocktail he had been drinking had unsettled his stomach like some form of laxative. So, he farted, a loud violent fart that made his body vibrate and brought the whole lecture to a complete halt while everyone’s eyes shifted to the back of the class where he slept, snoring peacefully. It was not unusual for anyone within that room to assume that George had defecated on himself given the violent nature of this particular fart.

“Are you feeling alright, George?” the lecturer asked, restraining herself from laughing, this was after she had walked towards George to shake him out of his deep sleep.

“Yes sir, it’s just a mild headache, but I am okay” he lied to the lecturer, oblivious to the fact that his fart had brought the lecture to the standstill.

“Why don’t you go to home, and rest the headache off? I will personally email you the notes to this lecture.” She responded still trying to keep a serious face.

He thanked her briefly and walked out of the classroom. To this day, no one, not even his friend Hector told him that he farted so loud during a lecture that the whole class was convinced he had excreted on himself. His lecturer since that day, reveals a rather hysteric smile each time she meets George anywhere within campus. George has formed the impression that his lecturer might be attracted to him. Unknown to him, she remembers him only as the boy who farted during her Sociology lecture.

His friend Hector was the precise opposite of George’s character. Since they arrived together at the University, Hector chose a separate path from George. Both had begun their University life as naïve delinquent teenagers with bouts of social anxiety and confusion. And yet by the end of four years, Hector held the distinction of being a mature, confident and decent adult who could to confidently relate to a large audience with some base in his voice, while George, despite the years, was still the noisy lad he was four years before. Exposure to the right-thinking circles of society had forged Hector into a respectable adult. At present, Hector had co-founded the Philosophy Society to which he held the title of president, he took part in University events, seminars and workshops while working at the firm that had recruited him as an intern. Hector was what Universities would view proudly as their accomplished product. And without wounding his ego, the picture of a better student life that George had for himself was exactly the life that Hector was leading. In moments of regrets, George wished for himself what Hector had achieved for himself. Of course, he never admitted that reality to himself – no man ever accepts that another man is a better version of what he could become.

So, when he woke up that Saturday morning, a state of depression took complete control over him. He had promised himself that he would quit drinking. His first thought was that he had begun this semester the same way he had begun all other semesters – with irresponsible intoxication. He sat on his bed, disappointed in himself, remembering his mother’s text messages. “There is so much to University life than partying and getting drunk” he thought to himself. He realized, at this point, that his biggest fear was disappointing himself and his parents once more. So, he stood up, packed European Union textbooks in his backpack and resolved that he would walk to the library to begin studying, despite the hangover. He dressed up without even taking a shower and walked towards the door as he left his apartment with some spirited determination. As he passed through his study desk, he read the piece of paper clipped to the wall with the resolutions that he had written for himself. He read it once more, and added the sixth note to his list;

6. Don’t disappoint yourself again – or your parents

“I will pass by the kiosk and get some painkillers for this headache and a cold coffee to stop the hangover” he thought to himself, as he walked towards the library, with rekindled determination.

DISCLAIMER: The incidents described in this story about George and Hector are purely fictional and drawn from the depths of my imagination. They are not based on any student at the University. Please note that any similarities between incidents described in this story and the real-life exploits of anyone at the University are purely coincidental. The writer is not, in any way, attacking the personal lives of anyone who may have a life impliedly identical to fictional George!
After months of hard work, preparations and excitement, our latest TEDx University of Nicosia event took place on November 11th. Once again, TEDx was a huge success; is what I keep hearing from everyone who attended. For me, it was my first TEDx experience and I honestly felt that it could not have been better. There was a huge team behind the scenes preparing for this event, from the curators, to the technical staff, to the volunteers and many more. I had the great pleasure of working with over 70 volunteers as their coordinator, alongside three other colleagues. So, some of you might be wondering, what is TED? TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to ideas worth spreading. A TEDx Talk is an independently organized event for speakers presenting great, well-formed ideas in under 18 minutes. An idea isn’t just a story or a list of facts. A good idea takes certain evidence or observations and draws a larger conclusion. The main idea behind TEDx events is to spark deep discussion and connection. These local, self-organized events are branded TEDx, one of which was TEDx University of Nicosia that took place recently with 9 speakers and 3 performers at the Filoxenia Conference Centre.

Let me tell you a little bit more about me; I am a 3rd year student in the Accounting Department at the University of Nicosia. However, I constantly have people telling me that it is not my calling, and that I belong in Public Relations, Event Management, and Communications etc... Initially, when I began my studies, I was the shy girl who roamed the corridors looking down at my feet, dreading the idea of anyone talking to me. I was never involved in any events, societies and never imagined I would be the person I am today. Over
the course of the past 3 years, I took a position as a Student Assistant at the Main Reception of the University of Nicosia, and at the same time got involved in as many events as I could. For me, my experiences at UNIC have been a huge boost of confidence, allowing me to develop my character and handle a role as active as Volunteers Coordinator for one of the most exciting events of the year. I still love Accounting, and I do not regret my decision, but other than academic opportunities, UNIC has opened many doors for me and provided me with much more than education.

Going back a few months, I initially expressed my interest to be a volunteer during the summer. In early September, I gladly accepted the role as a Volunteers Coordinator. Due to the fact that I work part time, and the event was scheduled during our midterm examinations period, I knew this was not going to be easy. Nevertheless, I was as excited as ever. I have always shared a great interest in TED talks, there’s something quite beautiful about the way the speakers speak so passionately about their ideas and experiences. I’m a strong believer that anyone who can speak about something over and over again without getting bored, truly has something interesting to say. The theme of this year’s TEDx University of Nicosia was GAME OVER. PLAY AGAIN? It was obvious that this year’s TEDx event was going to be very personal. This was one of the reasons I was so eager to be involved, I felt that my development and my experience was something that would make me able to relate to the speaker’s stories. The theme was about the many times in life we all find ourselves at a junction, a dead end, a game over. What do we do at this point? Do we overcome our fears? Do we move on with our lives? Do we play again?

For this year’s event, we had over 70 volunteers onboard helping beforehand on the day of the event. Through social media, we made a call for volunteers and the response we got was crazy, we had over 130 applications. Some of these, were people who wanted a free ticket to the event, others just wanted to meet a speaker, and the rest were the volunteers who genuinely shared a “volunteer gene” and truly wanted to be a part of this amazing event. These volunteers ranged from high school students, to university students, to older TED enthusiasts, each with a busy schedule of their own. However, despite their hectic everyday lives, our vo-
Volunteers joined us at meetings we held at the University of Nicosia. During these meetings, we played ice breaking games, got to know each other, shared our knowledge about TED and had a lot of fun.

As the event approached, we were down to 70 truly engaged, active and excited volunteers. It was very important for us to make sure that each volunteer would be assigned to a position that they would enjoy. Additionally, on the day of the event, we tried to make sure that all volunteers got to go in and hear at least one of the speakers they wanted to. The positions ranged from make-up artists, to photographers, to speaker’s assistants, venue assistants and many more. It goes without saying that the smooth running of this event, would not have been possible without the valuable help of all those volunteers. For us the Volunteers Coordinators, it was very difficult to balance our jobs, studies and the planning of TEDx, however we all did our part and worked together to make sure that the volunteers and ourselves were prepared for TEDx.

On the day of the event, we all gathered at the Filoxenia Conference Center as early as 7am. The whole team was buzzing with excitement, we couldn’t wait for the guests to arrive and share our enthusiasm. By 9:30 am, the place had flooded with attendees, over 700 of them. Upon arrival, each and every one of the guests was greeted, given a lanyard and a goody bag. After that, they all waited anxiously to go inside, see the stage and for the event to begin. We knew what to expect and how many people were going to be there, but the way they all lined up, waiting for the doors to open gave us all a rush of excitement. After that, the whole day went by in a flash. My role was to make sure volunteers were in their positions, the speakers were looked after, guided to stage, and make sure each volunteer got in to see at least one of the talks.

I don’t remember much about how the day went by, but I do remember, very distinctively what happened at the end of the event. After the 9 speakers and 3 performers went on stage, the curator of the event called all the volunteers to the stage. For that split second, we all got to look at the crowd and feel proud that the smiles and enthusiasm they all had on their faces, was a result of the hard work we had all put in throughout the day. After that, the host involved the volunteers and the audience to try the haka; a traditional war cry, war dance, challenge of the Māori culture. A million emotions filled the room, happiness, embarrassment, enthusiasm, laughter, even sadness that the event had reached an end. As the audience got up and applauded, the whole team; volunteers, host, curators, coordinators hugged, thanked and complimented each other for their hard work. Even though we were all exhausted, we were so happy and so proud to have been a part of it. Those are the moments I live for, people with the same passion coming together and sharing their time and effort towards a bigger cause. After all, that’s what TED is all about.

For me, it was TEDx, for you it could be joining a society, reading a new book, making new friends, attending a football match. It is so important to take advantage of as many things possible as you can. We are privileged enough to be at a University where we are given a chance to acquire a higher education, have access to the internet, unlimited resources, and share a community with over 8000 other University Students. So, the next time you have some free time, instead of scrolling through social media, I urge you to try something new, or spend time doing whatever you are passionate about; watch a TED talk, go for a walk, call that friend of yours you haven’t seen for a while, finish that assignment you have left pending, go to the gym. The opportunities are endless, and believe me there is nothing more rewarding than doing what you love, whatever that is. Education is important, but so are experiences, and having a healthy balance of both will give you the best years of your life.
Where are you in the game?

WRITTEN BY:
Ester Lima
BSc in Psychology

On November 11th the University of Nicosia hosted another TEDx event. This year’s theme was “Game Over. Play Again?” and I was over the moon to have the opportunity to attend it. Personally I am a big fan of TEDx talks and to be able to participate live in one of those events was an experience worth writing for.

We all know that life can be overwhelming and its challenges might feel too much to bear for each of us at times. And as one of the speakers on the conference, Dr. Jessamy Hibbert said “It is not what you achieve that counts but how you reach there”. Definitely the conference gave me a lot of food for thought, and that is precisely why I decided to share my impressions of the event.

So, first things first the organization of the event was spot on, great work of all the people involved. Now if you have ever felt that something is too complex to learn, like science, complicated and sophisticated, Jonny Berliner has an advice for you: write a song! Jonny explained how transforming scientific principles into music makes it easier to grasp and more interesting for those who do not see the connections of science in everyday life. In fact after one of his songs I can finally say Deoxyribonucleic acid with confidence and comfortably!!!

In fact, using science Prof. Philippos Patsalis, together with scientists all over the world, was able to find a safe and effective non-invasive method to do a prenatal test in the fetus. Driven by a great loss and in a moment where the game was over he decided to restart it; the result was a breakthrough in his field.

So, remember if life throws you lemons you...take out its seeds and plant it! Yes, that is right, just doing lemonade with it isn’t enough for Sofia Matsi, when you can do so much more by planting and grooming it, and not only for yourself but for an entire community. Sofia inspired us to take advantage of moments of despair, and to be patient; never to give up on the new game just because one battle is lost.

And in the same spirit of doing well for yourself but more yet for as many people as you can, Roya Mahboob growing up imagined a life for herself that in reality has changed many young girls’ lives in Afghanistan. In her own words “Breakthroughs in science, technology and other industries start with the dream of a child to do something great...
and make a difference. And that was the dream that I had in my childhood."

Indeed, talking about resilience, Emma Murphy and Suzana Hadjirousou Shiakalli shared with us how when life screamed “game over” for them they decided to play again and discovered that start over isn’t a bad thing at all. A turn into a dead end road may be just what we need to discover new ways.

But I must say if you think that alone you can do it, Alfred Bakker says collaboration is the new trend in business. In an era where complexity of creations is beyond imagination a new approach for researching solutions and optimization is needed, and indeed a new collaborative platform between companies, universities and local authorities has emerged.

Still in the research topic Dave Snowden told us how an approach that uses the participant as the researcher could be fairer especially when the complexity of human interactions influences, and even determines one’s experiences, and he developed a model to research, creating at the same time a framework for solution.

However, life is not endless as Oliver Burkeman reminded us in his talking, and we should take it into account when we feel frustrated because time is passing, and our goals seem to be unachievable. After all we have one limited lifetime to do infinite possible things, which can be overwhelming if our drive for achievement never ends. That is not to say we shouldn’t set goals and work for it; just part from the obsessive thinking that we are not there yet and instead call ourselves to look into what we have done. Oliver also pointed how we create so many tools to optimize our time and yet we have never been so busy and in need of time. So if life has come to a point where the game is over be inspired by the life experiences of these life players and just play it again!

And I want to finish this text with the full English version of the poem Ithaka from C. P. Kavafi, which was also cited by Dr. Jessamy Hibbert:

As you set out for Ithaka
hope the voyage is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don’t be afraid of them:
you’ll never find things like that on your way

as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won’t encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.
Hope the voyage is a long one.

May there be many a summer morning when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you come into harbors seen for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you are destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you are old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won’t have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.
Το σώμα μας ένα μουσείο φυσικής ιστορίας!

ΓΡΑΦΕΙ:
Μαρία-Αρσενία Μανιώρη
Πτυχίο Βιολογίας του Ανθρώπου

Στις 29 Σεπτεμβρίου 2017 ομάδα καθηγητών και φοιτητών του Πανεπιστημίου Λευκωσίας εκπροσώπησαν το Πανεπιστήμιο στην ετήσια διοργάνωση της Βραδιάς του Ερευνητή, μια βραδιά αφιερωμένη στην επιστήμη και την έρευνα. Η ίδρυμα διοργάνωσης αποτελεί πρωτοβουλία της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής και πραγματοποιείται κάθε χρόνο ταυτόχρονα σε σχεδόν όλες τις χώρες της Ευρώπης. Την βραδιά του Ερευνητή διοργανώνεται η Ιδρυμα Προώθηση και Ερευνητών (ΙΠΕ) σε συνεργασία με ακαδημαϊκά και ερευνητικά ιδρύματα και άλλους φορείς του τόπου.

Φέτος, η Βραδιά του Ερευνητή πραγματοποιήθηκε στους χώρους της Κρατικής Έκθεσης στην Λευκωσία. Το Πανεπιστήμιο Λευκωσίας συμμετείχε στη διοργάνωση στο περίπτερο με τον αριθμό 48. Προασπιστές του περιπτέρου ήταν εκπρόσωποι του προγράμματος αποδοτών «Βιολογίας του Ανθρώπου», του Τμήματος Επιστημών Ζωής και Υγείας, της Σχολής Επιστημών και Μηχανικής, με επικεφαλής τον Διευθυντή του Τμήματος Δρ. Κυριάκο Φελέκκη και την Επίκουρη Καθηγήτρια Δρ. Μυρτάνη Πιερή. Το περίπτερο είχε τον τίτλο «Το σώμα μας: ένα μουσείο φυσικής ιστορίας» και στόχος του ήταν να ενημερώσει μικρών και μεγάλων για το πώς και γιατί το σώμα μας θεωρείται ένα μικρό μουσείο. Φοιτητές του προγράμματος «Βιολογίας του Ανθρώπου» εξηγούσαν σε όλους τους επισκέπτες για τα χαρακτηριστικά του σώματός μας, ποια από αυτά έχουμε κληρονομήσει από τους προγόνους μας και πλέον μας είναι αχρείαστα, καθώς μέσα από την εξέλιξή μας στο πέρασμα
του χρόνου αποκτήσαμε ή χάσαμε κάποιες σωματικές δεξιότητες. Μέσα από φιλμάκια και παρουσιάσεις οι επισκέπτες είχαν την ευκαιρία να μάθουν για το σημείο του Δαρβίνου, το τρίτο βλέφαρο, τον επιπλέον τένοντα και μυς, τα αφτιά που κινούνται καθώς και άλλα πολλά που μέχρι σήμερα δεν έχαμε, τη χρησιμότητά τους και γιατί κάποιοι από εμάς τα έχουν ενώ κάποιοί άλλοι όχι. Το δίδαγμα της ημέρας ήταν ότι «Η εξέλιξη δεν παράγει τελειότητα, παράγει λειτουργικότητα!»

Επίσης, οι επισκέπτες είχαν την ευκαιρία να δουν και να επεξεργάστοσυναρμολογήσουμαθαίνοντας με αυτόν τον τρόπο τη δομή των εσωτερικών οργάνων του σώματος καθώς και λεπτομέρειες για τη λειτουργία τους. Η κούκλα προσομοίωσης του ανθρώπινου σώματος Adam επίσης ήταν στη διάθεση των επισκεπτών και ειδικά των μικρών μαθητών, οι οποίοι με μεγάλη περιέργεια αποσυναρμολογούσαν και επανασυναρμολογούσαν τον κορμό του Adam και τα εσωτερικά του όργανα σαν ένα μεγάλο τρισδιάστατο παζλ. Τέλος, οι επισκέπτες προτού αποχωρήσουν από το περίπτερο, συμπλήρωναν ένα σύντομο ερωτηματολόγιο. Στο ερωτηματολόγιο, καλούνταν να απαντήσουν περίπου δέκα ερωτήσεις σχετικά με τους τομείς της Επιστήμης για τους οποίους θα ενδιαφέρονταν να μάθουν περισσότερες πληροφορίες μέσω διαδραστικών παιχνιδιών και παρουσιάσεων. Το ερωτηματολόγιο αποτελούσε μέρος της έρευνας του Πανεπιστημίου σχετικά με έξυπνους, διασκεδαστικούς και προσιτούς τρόπους μετάδοσης της επιστημονικής γνώσης σε ανθρώπους διαφόρων ηλικιών και μορφωτικού επιπέδου, αποδεικνύοντας πως η επιστήμη μπορεί να είναι προσιτή σε όλους μας.
Πριν την έναρξη της καινούριας ακαδημαϊκής χρονιάς 2017-2018 είχα την ευκαιρία να γίνω Φοιτητής Οδηγός (Group Leader) στο πρόγραμμα προσανατολισμού του Πανεπιστημίου Λευκωσίας UNIC September 2017.

Το UNIC September είναι το πρόγραμμα προσανατολισμού σχεδιασμένο για τους καινούργιους φοιτητές του Πανεπιστημίου μας, που αποτελεί πρώτα να τους καλωσορίσει και ακολούθως να τους ενημερώνει, μέσα από μια σειρά εκδηλώσεων για όλα σχέδον τα θέματα σχετικά με τη ζωή και τις σπουδές τους στο πανεπιστήμιο. Στα πλαίσια του προγράμματος, οι φοιτητές παρακολούθησαν διάφορα σεμινάρια για τη ζωή στο πανεπιστήμιο, τα μαθήματα, τις αίθουσες διδασκαλίας κ.α. Μέσα από τις ψυχαγωγικές, κοινωνικές και αθλητικές δραστηριότητες οι καινούργιοι φοιτητές είχαν την ευκαιρία να γνωρίσουν ένας τον άλλο και να προσαρμοστούν πιο εύκολα στο καινούργιο τους περιβάλλον καθώς και να ξεναγηθούν στους χώρους του Πανεπιστημίου.
Δε μπορώ να μην αναφέρω τη χαρά που ένιωσα όταν μου ανακοινώθηκε ότι θα ήμουν και εγώ ένας από τους Group Leaders του προγράμματος προσανατολισμού UNIC September και θα είχα την τύχη να συναντήσω πρώτος τους καινούργιους φοιτητές του Πανεπιστημίου μας. Μέσα μου ένιωθα περήφανος γιατί αναλάμβανα τη μεγάλη ευθύνη να παρουσιάζω στα νέα παιδιά όχι μόνο τους χώρους του Πανεπιστημίου αλλά και το μεγάλο και αξιόλογο έργο του Πανεπιστημίου μας, που δίκαια βρίσκεται στην κορυφή των ιδιωτικών πανεπιστημίων.

Κατά τη διάρκεια του προγράμματος έχω την ευκαιρία να έρθω σε επαφή με πάρα πολλούς φοιτητές τόσο από το εξωτερικό όσο και από την Κύπρο. Μέσα από τις διάφορες δραστηριότητες που περιλάμβανε το πρόγραμμα είχαμε την ευκαιρία να γνωρίσουμε καλύτερα και να ανταλλάξουμε απόψεις και ιδέες σε διάφορα θέματα όπως η διαφορετική κουλτούρα, τα έθιμα και παραδόσεις μας. Αξέχαστε θα μου μείνουν και οι αναμνήσεις από τα νυχτερινά πάρτι με τους συμφοιτητές μου, οι περιπάτους στη Λευκωσία, οι εκδρομές (στο Τρόοδος και στη Λάρνακα). Σε αυτές τις εκδρομές είχα την ευκαιρία να περιπατήσω το μονοπάτι μελέτης της φύσης στα Καλυδόνια και να κολυμπήσω με τους συμφοιτητές μου στη θάλασσα της Λάρνακας και να κάνω Yoga στην παραλία!

Πραγματικά ήταν ένα από τα καλύτερα καλοκαίρια που είχα τα τελευταία χρόνια γιατί όσες μέρες διάρκεσε το πρόγραμμα μετάφρασαμε καθημερινά ανάμεσα σε φίλους, που αν και γνωριζόμασταν για λίγες μόνο μέρες ήταν σαν να τους γνώριζα από χρόνια.

Ωφείλω ένα μεγάλο ευχαριστώ στο Πανεπιστήμιο Λευκωσίας, στο Sports Office και σε όλους όσους μου εμπιστεύτηκαν την θέαση του Group Leader στο UNIC September. Είναι αλήθεια ότι κάθε μέρα διάρκεια του προγράμματος μου διασώζει σταθερά σταματούσαν να μας εμπνεύσουν να πραγματικά θα μου μείνουν αξέχαστες και θα με βοηθήσουν στην μελλοντική μου πορεία.
Πολλοί πιστεύουν ότι η εξασφάλιση πτυχίου, μεταπτυχιακού ή διδακτορικού τους μετατρέπει αυτόματα σε άτομα άξια, άτομα που μπορούν να γίνουν πρότυπα και να δώσουν το δικό τους στίγμα στη νέα αυτή εποχή που ζούμε. Ποσό όμως ισχύει αυτό;

Είναι γεγονός ότι οι περισσότεροι ανθρώποι που έχουν καταφέρει να αποκτήσουν ένα διδακτορικό είναι άτομα με ψηλό επίπεδο ευφυΐας, άτομα ικανά, που θέλουν να διευρύνουν τις γνώσεις τους για να μπορούν να τις μεταλλαμπαδεύσουν σε άλλα άτομα, οι οικογένειές τους. Σε αυτή την κατηγορία ατόμων ανήκουν και οι καθηγητές.

Οι περισσότεροι από εμάς πιστεύουμε ότι οι άνθρωποι αυτοί είναι παντογνώστες και πιο συγκεκριμένα, υπόδειγμα καλής συμπεριφοράς. Λάθος. Η εξυπνάδα και η γνώση, δεν συνοδεύεται απαραίτητα ή πάντοτε από καλή συμπεριφορά. Όσο έξυπνος και αν είναι κάποιος, όσα και αν γνωρίζει, δεν σημαίνει ότι μπορεί να ξέρει να χειρίζεται και τα δυο με τον σωστό τρόπο.

Μέσα από τη συνεργασία μου με καθηγητές που έχουν σπουδάσει στα καλύτερα πανεπιστήμια, έχω καταλάβει τελικά ότι τους τρόπους καλής συμπεριφοράς, δυστυχώς, δεν μπορεί κανέναν πανεπιστήμιο να τους διδάξει. Αυτό είναι κάτι που ξεκινά από μέσα μας κάτι που μαθαίνουμε από πολύ μικρή ηλικία. Συγκεκριμένα, συνοδεύεται από το να είσαι μετριόφρως, να σέβεσαι αυτόν που βρίσκεσαι απέναντί σου και να προσπαθείς να τον βοηθήσεις με κάθε τρόπο χωρίς να τον κάνεις να νιώσει υποτιμητικά. Ο σωστός τρόπος διδασκαλίας είναι κάτι που πιστεύουμε πως μπορεί να καλλιεργήσει μέσα του/της ένας/μια καθηγητής/τρια. Εντούτοις υπάρχουν καθηγητές που επειδή έχουν αποκτήσει διδακτορικό τίτλο σπουδών πιστεύουν ότι έχουν τη δυνατότητα να προσβάλουν, να μειώσουν τους φοιτητές/τριες επειδή για παράδειγμα δεν γνωρίζεις κάτι που σύμφωνα με αυτούς θα έπρεπε να γνωρίζεις. Αλλά τελικά τέτοιο τύπου από αυτά δεν υπάρχει αφού τι συστατικό είναι αυτό που μπορεί να αποκτάς σε αυτόν ή στο πανεπιστήμιο γνωρίζαμε τα πάντα από πριν;

Δυστυχώς πολλοί καθηγητές θεωρούν ότι είναι υπεράνω όλων και ότι με τη δύναμη της γνώσης που κατέχουν πιστεύουν πως έχουν το δικαίωμα να συμπεριφέρονται όσχημα. Τέτοιου είδους συμπεριφορές όμως έχουν αρνητικό αντίκτυπο προς τη ψυχολογία του μαθητή/φοιτητή, όχι μόνο στον ακαδημαϊκό τομέα άλλα και στις καθημερινότητες του γενικότερα.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, αυτοί οι καθηγητές είναι αυτοί που σέβεται και αγαπά το επάγγελμά του, αυτοί που εκτιμά και κατανοεί τους μαθητές του, αυτοί που έχουν τόσο σώφρων, έτοι ώστε να κατανοηθεί ο γεγονός ότι ο ρόλος του μαθητή/φοιτητή είναι να μαθαίνει να προοδεύει και να προσπαθεί να επιδείξει καλύτερα.

Αγαπητοί καθηγητές στις πλάτες σας κουβαλάτε ψυχές και όχι ρομπότ. Η ευθύνη προς τους μαθητευόμενους σας είναι τεράστια. Ο κάθε ένας από εμάς είναι εξεξωριστός και πρέπει να αντιμετωπίζεται διαφορετικά. Σκεφτείτε μόνο πόσα πολλά κερδίζετε από τον καθένα μας και μάθετε από αυτόν τις πιστώσεις σας αποκτάτε ένα από τα σημαντικότερα πτυχία της ζωής, το πτυχίο της υπομονής.
Emotional intelligence – The other kind of smart

WRITTEN BY:
Stephani Antoniou
BSc in Psychology

November 2nd, a loud chuckle filled the amphitheatre. A jetlagged yet charming figure standing on the podium, speaking out to the captivated audience hanging from his every word. The man was Dr Marios Constantinou giving a talk on emotional intelligence. Sitting at the far end of the amphitheatre I found myself wishing to have arrived a few minutes earlier. Time seemed to fly by, the seminar was already over! Everyone had so many questions, so much more they wanted to know. Dr Constantinou managed to spark an interest in all of us. Calming down his excited audience he answered every question, promising that an additional workshop would take place soon. For me it wasn’t enough. That night I caught myself searching the web for more information. The plethora of information online bombarded my mind; eBooks, scientific papers, articles ... there were so much more to know, and then it hit me. Maybe there were others like me. People that wanted to know more. So, I decided to put to paper some of the things I found.

In 1990s, the pre-eminence of IQ as the standard of excellence in life was undisputed; a debate raged over whether it was set in our genes or due to experiences. But there it was a different grasp on the idea of intelligence. Maybe the ingredients in the recipe for success were not all known. A vital element was up to that point given little attention.

It was not until the mid-1990s that emotional intelligence (EI) first appeared to the masses, serving as the missing link in understanding how 70% of the time, individuals of average IQs outperformed those with the highest IQs. This irregularity caused a gigantic wrench into what many
people had always presumed was the single basis of success – IQ. Decades of research now point to EQ as the critical factor that separates star performers from the rest of the pack.

We all know that person that can stay calm during a crisis. That takes care in making sensitive decisions in a stressful situation, having full control over their emotions. They have that special ability to read other people’s emotions, understanding what to say and how to make them feel better, inspiring them to act.

These people have what we call emotional intelligence. EQ is that elusive ingredient in a recipe bringing everything together. It affects how we navigate social complexities, manage behaviour and make personal choices which attain positive results.

Emotional intelligence is made up of four core skills that pair up under two primary competencies: personal competence and social competence.

Personal competence is comprised of your self-awareness and self-management skills, focusing to you as an individual rather than your interpersonal interactions. Personal competence is your ability to stay aware of your emotions and manage your behaviour and propensities.

• Self-Awareness is your ability to accurately perceive your emotions and stay aware of them as they happen.
• Self-Management is your ability to use awareness of your emotions to stay flexible and positively direct your behaviour.

Social competence is comprised of your social awareness and relationship management skills; meaning your ability to understand other people’s moods, behaviour, and motives in order to improve the quality of your relationships.

• Social Awareness is your ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people and understand what is really going on.
• Relationship Management is your ability to use awareness of your emotions and the others’ emotions to manage interactions successfully.

**Emotional Intelligence & Performance.**

After reading the first part of the article you may have come to wonder how much in reality does emotional intelligence affect my professional success? Well the answer is: Massively!

For managers, being aware of what emotional intelligence is and how it is used in everyday life, is of the utmost importance. Being aware of how social and personal competencies apply to their jobs exerts an enormous weight for managers and senior staff, determining their success.

Just imagine how could someone manage others if they cannot even manage themselves? Failing to combine personal with social competence could be detrimental in a manager’s career. Therefore, understanding and developing your EQ skills is crucial to best serve your team, and consequently ensure a prosperous career.

**Why is emotional Intelligence important at work?**

• **Managing Stress**

Emotional intelligence helps in managing stress. It is vital in enhancing cooperation and team work and helps us to learn in relationships.

• **Collaboration**

Our ability to work together is profoundly impacted by our emotions, and this requires an ability to self-sooth, connect, and integrate in work place relationships.

Research revealed that 67% of all competencies deemed essential for high performance were related to emotional intelligence. It was also discovered that EQ had twice the impact of technical knowledge or IQ for this high performance. One study tested 186 executives on EQ and compared their scores with their company’s profitability. They found that leaders who scored higher in EQ were more likely to be highly profitable. Another study discovered that when questioned what traits set superior performers apart, emotionally intelligent competencies were highlighted 44% of the time compared to cognitive intelligent competencies which were only noted 19% of the time.

Your emotional intelligence is the foundation for a host of
critical skills—it impacts everything you say and do each day. In a study by TalentSmart which tested EQ in conjunction with 33 other important workplace skills, EQ was found to be the strongest predictor of performance, explaining a full 58% of success in all types of jobs. Furthermore, studies have revealed that 90% of top performers are also high in emotional intelligence in all industries and at all levels.

Research in the field indicates the benefits of EQ in the workplace allowing you to:

- successfully manage difficult situations,
- express yourself clearly,
- keep cool under pressure,
- gain the respect of others,
- influence those around you,
- notice others to help them out,
- recognise their emotional reactions (to people or situations),
- know how to say the “right” thing to get the desired result,
- manage yourself and others effectively during negotiations,
- motivate yourself to get things done and,
- know how to be positive, even during difficult situations.

**Emotional Intelligence Can Be Developed.**

The communication between your emotional and rational “brains” is the physical source of emotional intelligence. The pathway for emotional intelligence starts in the brain, at the spinal cord. Primary senses, such as sight, enter here, firstly traveling through the limbic system (where emotions are generated) finally reaching the anterior lobe, before you are able to contemplate your experience. This means that an emotional reaction takes place before our rational mind can engage. Emotional intelligence requires effective communication between the rational and emotional centres of the brain.

Your brains plasticity; the brain’s ability to change, allows the growth of an endless amount of new connections as you learn new skills. Change is gradual, as your brain cells mature new connections develop to speed the efficiency of new skills acquired.

Using strategies to increase your emotional intelligence permits the billions of microscopic neurons lining the pathway connecting the rational and emotional centres of your brain, to branch off small “arms” (much like a tree) reaching out to adjacent cells, thus creating a tiny network. A single cell has the ability to grow 15,000 connections with its neighbouring cells. This chain reaction of growth ensures it’s easier to propel this new behaviour into action in the future. Once your brain is trained repeatedly via new EQ strategies, EQ behaviours develop into habits.

**Emotionally intelligent CEOs**

**Warren Buffett – BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY**

Buffet once famously stated that “Success in investing doesn’t correlate with IQ once you’re about the level of 25. Once you have ordinary intelligence, what you need is the temperament to control the urges that get other people into trouble investing”. Buffett is relationship-driven and asks his CEOs to run their companies as if they were to own them 100 years from now.

**Jamie Dimon – JPMORGANCHASE**

At Harvard Business School, Dimon said: “You all know about IQ and EQ. Your IQ’s are all high enough for you to be very successful, but where people often fall short is on the EQ. It’s something you develop over time. A lot of management skills are EQ because management is all about how people function.

Today companies worldwide routinely look through the lens of Emotional Intelligence in hiring, promoting, and developing their employees. For instance, Johnson and Johnson (another CREIO member) found that in divisions around the world, those identified at mid-career as having high leadership potential were far stronger in Emotional Intelligence competencies than were their less-promising peers.
The 39th International School Psychology Association (ISPA) conference in Manchester, UK was a great opportunity to present some of the findings of the effectiveness evaluation of the Mentor – Youth Guidance Program. More specifically a poster was prepared and presented with the title “A mentoring program for supporting vulnerable children: exploration of the gains for mentors” (Anastasiou, Georgaki & Angelidou, 2017).

Mentoring takes place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced people (i.e., mentors), who are acting in a non-professional helping capacity to provide relationship-based support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee’s development (MENTOR, 2015). Universities are increasingly investing in service learning as a pedagogical strategy (Reeb, 2010) for promoting the development of socially responsible knowledge and values among students (Altman, 1996). A primary goal of service-learning is to develop civicmindedness in students, or a sense of responsibility and a commitment to actively engage in one’s community (Bringle & Steinberg, 2010). Service-learning outcomes may vary by the type of service-learning activity (Weiler, Haddock, Zimmerman, Krafchick, Henry & Rudisill, 2013). Following this line of evidence, the University of Nicosia has adopted, adjusted and implemented the PERACH (acronym in Hebrew for “tutoring project” and also means a “flower”) under the name MENTOR Youth Guidance Program. MENTOR pairs up children from underprivileged backgrounds with university students who act as their tutors, giving the child personal attention and serving as a role model.
The aim of the study presented at the ISPA conference focused on examining the effects of the mentoring relationship on the mentors. It was hypothesized that mentors would report significant changes at the personal and the professional level. Similarly to previous research findings, personal development was expected to include skills such as self-esteem, social insight and interpersonal skills. The professional level was expected to include skills and/or knowledge that would enhance students’ professional progress in their field of study.

Thirty-six University students participated in the study as mentors (33 female students and 3 male students). Twenty-two participants were undergraduate students and fourteen were postgraduate students. The students were recruited from 8 undergraduate programmes of study: twelve students from Psychology, four students from Elementary Education, one student from Pre-School Education, one student from Biology, one from Philosophy, one from Law, one from Accounting and one from Business Administration. Fourteen postgraduate students also participated: seven students of MSc School Psychology and seven students of MSc Counseling Psychology. All participants completed the Programme Evaluation Questionnaire for Mentors (Courtesy of Mass Mentoring Partnership – Mentoring A-Z Training Manual), which was translated and adapted in Greek. Also, mentors completed detailed notes for every session they had with the child.

The results showed improvements in the domains of self-esteem, interpersonal skills, insight to childhood and professional skills. A total of 91.3% of the participants reported that they significantly gained from their mentoring experience. 74% of them assessed their mentoring experience as excellent and 87% of the participants reported that the relationship created with their mentee was very effective in regards to helping the child develop in the various domains.

The ISPA experience was a unique and gainful experience. The opportunity to present research findings to fellow students and academics from around the world provides excellent conditions for the exchange of knowledge and experience. The international perspective guides researchers to think outside their own box and enrich their ideas and goals. The discussions with people implementing similar mentoring programs in other countries were very inspiring and exciting at the same time. It was very interesting to learn that despite the cultural differences, the motivation, the concerns and the aims of every mentoring program are the same. The mentoring community around the world seems to be empowering, giving hope for all the children who need to be reminded that the sun is still behind the clouds, even if they cannot see it.

I urge all the students to participate in this initiative and become mentors. The gains are far more meaningful and rewarding than any study can report. The mentors grow and mature as humans in a unique and magical way through the relationship developed with “their” child. If you want to experience magic contact the MENTOR – Youth Guidance Program (mentor.project@unic.ac.cy) and claim a position as mentor.

References:
Η εμπειρία μου στο πρόγραμμα Μέντωρ.

ΓΡΑΦΕΙ:
Δέσπω Γενεθλή
Μεταπτυχιακό Σχολικής Ψυχολογίας

Πριν από περίπου ένα χρόνο, στα πλαίσια ενός μαθήματος του Μεταπτυχιακού Προγράμματος Σχολικής Ψυχολογίας, άκουσα για πρώτη φορά για το πρόγραμμα “Μέντωρ”. Το πρόγραμμα έχει στόχο να προσφέρει σε παιδιά από ευάλωτες ομάδες, ευκαιρίες για κοινωνικοποίηση και ανάπτυξη. Ωστόσο, ήταν στην αγάπη μου για τα παιδιά και την ανάγκη τους να προσφέρω αιτήθηκα χωρίς να γνωρίζω πολλά για τις απαιτήσεις του προγράμματος. Οι απορίες και οι προβληματισμοί μου λύθηκαν στην πρώτη συνάντηση με τη συντονίστρια του προγράμματος η οποία μου εξήγησε, μεταξύ άλλων, ότι το πρόγραμμα προβλέπει δύο εβδομαδιαίες διώρες συναντήσεις με το παιδί. Παρά τους αρχικούς μου ενδοιασμούς για την έλλειψη χρόνου στο πιεσμένο μου πρόγραμμα, εμπιστεύτηκα το ένστικτο και τον ενθουσιασμό μου και αποφάσισα να συμμετάσχω.

Μετά την ολοκλήρωση της εκπαίδευσης ήρθε η ώρα που περίμενα, η γνωριμία μου με το παιδί και την οικογένεια του. Η συντονίστρια μου με συνόδευσε στο σπίτι της οικογένειας, όπου γνωρίσαμε την οικογένεια του Μέντωρ και μέσα από ευχάριστα βιωματικά παιχνίδια λάβαμε χρήσιμες πληροφορίες για το ρόλο μας ως μέντορες.

Συζητούσαμε κάθε φορά και περισσότερο και προσθέταμε ένα στόχο στη λίστα με τα πράγματα που θα ήθελαν να μάθουν και να γίνουν. Η οικογένεια ήταν από τη Συρία και ζούσαν σε ένα μικρό σπίτι. Όλοι ήταν πολύ φιλόξενοι μας και έδειχναν να χαίρονταν που μας είχαν στο σπίτι τους. Ένιωσα άνετα και όταν ο Α. έκανε κάποια λέξη ή έκανε κάποια δράση, ήταν ένα πράγμα που θα ήθελα να μάθει. Η συντονίστρια μας έδιδε ένα στόχο την πρώτη συνάντηση και άρχισαν να τον αναπτύσσουμε καθώς πηγαίναμε σε δράσεις του προγράμματος και επισκέπτηκαν το στούντιο ενός ζωγράφου. Ο Α. έγινε γενικά να πούμε τα νέα μας, που ήταν σχεδόν πάντα ευχάριστα. Υπήρξαν όμως και φορές που τα πράγματα δεν ήταν τόσο καλά για τον Α. Εκείνες τις φορές προσπαθούσαμε να τις δούμε ως μια ευκαιρία να μάθουμε κάτι και να γίνουμε πιο δυνατοί. Ανακάλυψα με τον καιρό ότι ο Α. είναι ένα παιδί με πολλά δυνατά και δημιουργικά δέχτηκαν και συνήθως να χρησιμοποιούμε τις καινοτομίες του στη ζωγραφική, τα παιχνίδια και τη μαγειρική. Πήγαμε στο σινεμά, στο θέατρο, συμμετείχαμε σε δράσεις του προγράμματος και επισκέφτηκαμε το στούντιο ενός ζωγράφου. Ο Α. είχε και η ευκαιρία να...
ζωγραφίσει μαζί με τον καλλιτέχνη ένα πίνακα για τον οποίο ήταν πολύ περήφανος και τον έδειξε στους συμμαθητές και τη δασκάλα του. Καθόλου τη διάρκεια του χρόνου δεν υπήρξαν στιγμές που να νιώσω ανεπιθύμητα στο σπίτι της οικογένειας. Απεναντίας, ένωθα άνετα να χρησιμοποιούμε την κουζίνα ή τη βεράντα για τις δραστηριότητες μας και πολλές φορές ο Α. παρουσίαζε τις δημιουργίες του στην οικογένειά του στο τέλος της συνάντησης.

Ο χρόνος πέρασε πολύ γρήγορα και το πρόγραμμα έφτασε στο τέλος του. Το κλείσιμο της σχέσης ήταν για μένα ίσως η δυσκολότερη πρόκληση στο πρόγραμμα. Παρόλη τη συγκίνησή μου, οργάνωσα μια σειρά από όμορφες δραστηριότητες για τη τελευταία μας συνάντηση. Φτιάξαμε ένα λεύκωμα με αναμνήσεις και φωτογραφίες μας και οργανώσαμε τον πάγκο μας για την επερχόμενη γιορτή του Μέντωρ, που θα ήταν και η τελευταία γιορτή για το κλείσιμο του προγράμματος.

Εκείνη τη μέρα, είδα μαζεμένα όλα όσα περάσαμε αυτή τη χρονιά και αντιλήφθηκα πόσο δρόμο είχαμε διανύσει για να φτάσουμε να έχουμε τη σημερινή μας σχέση. Έζησα την εμπειρία του χτισίματος μιας σχέσης με ένα παιδί και μια οικογένεια από άλλη κουλτούρα, αποδέχθηκα και ανταπέδωσα τη φιλοξενία τους και επιβεβαίωσα την εμπειρία μου ότι οι διαφορές μας είναι πολύ μικρές αν τις συγκρίνουμε με τις ομοιότητες μας. Από την άλλη, ο Α. μου έδειξε εμπιστοσύνη και ανοίχτηκε παρουσιάζοντάς μου τα ταλέντα και τις δυνάμεις του. Το γεγονός ότι ένας ενήλικος ήταν εκεί για να τον πιστέψω και να τον ενθαρρύνω, τον έκανε να πιστέψει περισσότερο στον εαυτό του και σταδιακά τολμούσε να εκφράζει πιο συχνά τις σκέψεις και τις ιδέες του.

Εν τέλει, όσο και αν μας πιέζουν οι γρήγοροι ρυθμοί της σύγχρονης ζωής, κάποιοι υπάρχουν λίγοι χρόνος στο πρόγραμμά μας και λίγος χώρος στην καρδιά μας για να προσφέρουμε σ’ αυτόν που το χρειάζεται. Και ίσως τελικά ανακαλύψουμε ότι κι εμείς το χρειάζομασταν...!
Anorexia Nervosa: Lifting the veil

WRITTEN BY:
Penny Constantinou
BSc in Law (LLB)
Alumni

Society has predominantly linked the term, “Anorexia Nervosa” to the fear of eating and gaining weight. This is purely because the media has bombarded society with articles stating that the, ‘skinny fashion industry’ is promoting an unhealthy body image, causing young girls to develop eating disorders. Even though this is not entirely false, it is not entirely true either.

My battle with anorexia began when I was 10. The fashion industry had nothing to do with it and not wanting to eat was a major symptom but it was not the sole symptom. In fact, calorie restriction has to do with a lot more than just, ‘losing weight’. In my case, calorie restriction paved the way for defeating, ‘weak’ human needs. Not needing food made me feel powerful and disciplined.

I have been living with anorexia for 14 years now during which, I was admitted as an inpatient multiple times in ED treatment facilities. As a result, I am, now, weight restored. Does this mean that I have recovered from anorexia? Honestly, the only reason I am maintaining my current ‘goal weight’ is because if I lose weight, the ED clinic I am in a contract with, will require that I get re-admitted immediately.

Clearly, regaining weight cannot magically cure anorexia, because anorexia is not just about losing weight. Most sufferers are afraid to admit this, but anorexic individuals can hear anorexia talking inside their heads. It is an ongoing dialogue of how ‘pathetic, ugly, unlovale and useless’ we are and how we can change all that by doing as she says. Anorexia becomes a real person to sufferers the majority of
which will give a real human name to their disease. I did name mine and I have become who she wanted me to be; My grades are straight As, I wake up everyday at 5am to workout, I finished first at University and in rhythmic gymnastics, and my life is scheduled months ahead at a time. I achieved anorexia’s goals and my own goal, which was to make ‘Ana’ proud.

However, anorexia can take over a patient’s mind and it is then that things turn dark.

I love my parents with all my heart but I did physically attack and hurt my mum. I did drive my dad into depression. I did hurt myself during a psychotic episode. I did attempt to end my life. Anorexia entails harming, and of course lying to your loved ones on a daily basis. You master the art of deception; lying about eating, hiding food, cancelling social engagements to avoid eating out, abusing laxatives and other substances, faking your weight. It is a never-ending list.

Strange as it may sound, anorexia has always been there for me and I am at a stage where I cannot imagine life without her. I am petrified to even breathe without her.

Nonetheless, I do realise how crazy this must sound and hence, it is my responsibility to warn others that anorexia is indeed an addictive, destructive killer.
Και τώρα τι;

ΓΡΑΦΕΙ:
Νικόλας Χριστοδούλου
Πτυχίο Εφαρμοσμένων Πολυμέσων – Απόφοιτος

Στο τέλος κάθε ακαδημαϊκής χρονιάς, φτάνει η στιγμή που ο κάθε τελειόφοιτος θα αναρωτηθεί. Και τώρα τι;

Μερικοί έχουν ήδη προγραμματίσει κάτι για τα επόμενα χρόνια. Κάποιοι θα συνεχίσουν ως ελεύθεροι επαγγελματίες και όπου βγει, κάποιοι έχουν ήδη εξασφαλίσει μία θέση μετά την πρακτική τους άσκηση, κάποιοι θα ξεκινήσουν για την πρακτική τους άσκηση και κάποιοι θα βγουν στο μαύρο κυκλώνα της αναζήτησης εργασίας.

Εγώ επέλεξα να κάνω την πρακτική μου άσκηση στο εξωτερικό, μιας και το Erasmus Programme προσφέρει αυτή την υπέροχη ευκαιρία. Αφού είχα ήδη πάει στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο ως «φοιτητής ανταλλαγής» (exchange student) για ένα ακαδημαϊκό έτος, στον τρίτο χρόνο σπουδών μου, αυτή τη φορά ήθελα να επιλέξω μία χώρα πιο κοντά στην δική μου κουλτούρα και τα δικά μου θέλημα.

Εκατοντάδες αιτήσεις, μηδαμινές απαντήσεις. 2 χρόνια εμπειρίας, 4 χρόνια εμπειρίας. Film Editor/Animator/Graphic/Multimedia/3D product designer. Αγγλικά, Γερμανικά, Ελληνικά, Ρώσικα, Κινέζικα, και ό,τι άλλο «extra» είναι υπέρ.

Εύκολο ε; Να το ζητάς, ναι. 24 χρόνων με τα απαιτούμενα αυτά, μάλλον λίγο δύσκολο. Στέλνεις πορτφόλιο, στέλνεις CV, Behance, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram και ό,τι άλλο ζητάνε και ο Θεός βοηθός. Ψυχοφθόνες οι επόμενες 1-2 εβδομάδες. Παίρνεις επιτέλους 4-5 απαντήσεις. "Δυστυχώς η θέση αυτή έχει ήδη παραχωρηθεί. Δυστυχώς πρέπει να γνωρίζεις τη γλώσσα. Δυστυχώς είσαι άπειρος. Δυστυχώς δεν γνωρίζεις αυτό το πρόγραμμα" (αφού ζητήσανε ήδη να ξέρεις 15). Δυστυχώς, δυστυχώς, δυστυχώς…

"Όλα καλά", λές. Γνωρίζοντας ότι με τα σημερινά δεδομένα οι απαιτήσεις από τους εργοδότες είναι αναμφισβήτητα υψηλές και η σφαγή για τον οποίο θα πάρει μια θέση για 800 ευρώ είναι εξαιρετικά μεγάλη. Είχα λάβει και αρκετά μηνύματα, όπου το πορτφόλιό μου άρεσε και υπήρξε ενδιαφέρον από πολύ καλές εταιρείες στη χώρα αυτή, που ήθελαν να μου δώσουν αυτή την ευκαιρία. Το πρόβλημα όμως ήταν η γλώσσα.

Επιμένοντας στο στόχο μου, λαμβάνοντας απαντώ "δυστυχώς" ή και καθόλου απάντηση για πάνω από δυόμιση μίνες, έρχεται το μέρος που επιτέλους παιρνά μία θετική απάντηση. Αύγουστος 2017. Η απάντηση που είχα δώσει ήταν σαφές αυτή την ευκαιρία. Ευτυχώς δεν ήταν απαραίτητο να γνωρίζεις τη γλώσσα. Μόνο αγγλικά. "4 μέρες πριν τις καλοκαιρινές διακοπές και ο εργοδότης μου ζητά συμπληρωμένα όλα τα χαρτιά πριν το κλείσιμο και 28 Αυγούστου ξεκινάς".

Πήρα βαθιά ανάσα και ξεκίνησα την χαρά να γνωρίζω την χώρα. Για καλή μου τύχη είχα προλάβει. Η μεγάλη χαρά και το άγχος δεν περιγράφονται, γνωρίζοντας ότι θα ταξιδέψω σε είχα ήδη ήταν πεδίο πολλών άλλων, θάλασσα, καφετέριες, ιστορικά κτήρια, τουρισμό και ηλιόλουστο καιρό. Μια πόλη που σε κάθε γωνιά της, χωρίς καμία υπερβολή, έχει κάτι να δεις, έχει κάτι να κάνεις.

Το μήνυμα που θα ήθελα να μεταφέρω σε κάθε τελειόφοιτο είναι να μην τα παρατά ποτέ. Στις μέρες μας αν έχεις μία δουλειά είσαι ευλογημένος. Η επιμονή και υπομονή πάντα ανταμείβονται και οι στόχοι πάντα θα πραγματοποιούνται όταν υπάρχει θέληση. Το πρόβλημα είναι ότι κάποιοι μας έφεραν σε αυτή τη δύσκολη θέση αλλά με δύναμη ψυχής μπορούμε να μη βάξουμε ποτέ τελεία στα όνειρα μας.
Με αφορμή τα πρόσφατα δημοσιευμένα περιστατικά σχολικού εκφοβισμού (bullying) στα σχολεία, εγείρεται ένα μεγάλο ερώτημα “ποιους βρίσκονται σαν κοινωνία σχετικά με αυτό το φαινόμενο?”

Πρώτα από όλα ποια είναι η ακρίβης έννοια αυτής της πολυσυζητημένης λέξης “εκφοβισμός”? Ο σχολικός εκφοβισμός σύμφωνα με τους ψυχολόγους είναι η επαναλαμβανόμενη επιθετική συμπεριφορά σε μορφή σωματικής, λεπτικής, ψυχολογικής ή και κοινωνικής βίας την οποία κάποιος/οι σκόπιμα ή απρόκλητα προκαλεί/όνει σε άλλο άτομο όπως π.χ τραυματισμό ή δυσφορία. Ενα θύμα εκφοβισμού έχει συνήθως πρόβλημα στο να υπερασπιστεί τον εαυτό του και τις περισσότερες φορές δεν κάνει τίποτα για να το αντιμετωπίσει.

Επιπρόσθετα, ο εκφοβισμός μπορεί να παραπεταθεί οποιαδήποτε στα σχολεία, στον εργασιακό χώρο, στο στρατό σε αθλητικά σωματεία στα μέσα κοινωνικής, στα σχολεία στον εργασιακό χώρο, στο δικτύωσης κλπ. Οι λόγοι εμφάνισης του ποικίλλουν. Στρατιώτες στο στρατό σε αθλητικά σωματεία στα μέσα κοινωνικής οπουδήποτε, στα σχολεία, στον εργασιακό χώρο, στο δικτύωσης κλπ. Αυτό σημαίνει ανθρώπους να παρακαταλήψουν ή αποκλείσουν όπως π.χ τραυματισμό ή δυσφορία. Το ίδιο συνιστά και σύμφωνα με τους ψυχολόγους.</p>
εκπαίδευση το 2009 ανέρχονταν στο 7.9% του ακαθάριστου εγχώριου προϊόντος. Οι ετήσιες δαπάνες στην Κύπρο τόσο στον δημόσιο όσο και στον ιδιωτικό τομέα ανέρχονται στις 9.145 ευρώ ανά μαθητή, ενώ ο μέσος όρος στην Ευρώπη είναι 6.900 ευρώ.

Συμφώνα με τα παραπάνω δεδομένα θα έπρεπε ως χώρα να πρωτοπορούμε σε θέματα εκπαίδευσης. Απογοητευτικά και καθόλου ενθαρρυντικά είναι όμως τα αποτελέσματα των τελευταίων διεθνών ερευνών PISA όσον αφορά τις ακαδημαϊκές δεξιότητες των Κυπρίων στην Ανάγνωση, Μαθηματικά και τις Θετικές Επιστήμες. Συγκεκριμένα η έρευνα του 2012, κατέταξε την χώρα στην 46η θέση στα Μαθηματικά, στην 50η στις Φυσικές Επιστήμες και στην 44η στην κατανόηση κειμένου στο σύνολο των 65 χωρών. Η τελευταία έρευνα του 2015, η οποία δημοσιεύτηκε το 2016, τοποθετεί την Κύπρο στην 49η θέση ανάμεσα σε 72 χώρες. Καταλαμβάνει επίσης την τελευταία θέση ανάμεσα στις άλλες 28 ευρωπαϊκές χώρες. Άξιο αναφοράς ωστόσο είναι και το γεγονός ότι από το 1995 μέχρι και το 2009 η ποιότητα της εκπαίδευσης είχε παρουσιάσει πρόοδο μόνο 1%. Δεν είναι μυστικό ότι οι Κύπριοι μαθητές ποτέ δεν “σκόραραν” καλά σε παγκόσμιους διαγωνισμούς. Αβίαστα λοιπόν συνάγεται το συμπέρασμα ότι το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα της χώρας μας εν έτη 2017 νοσεί.

Τώρα τι γίνεται όσον αφορά τον εκφοβισμό στα κυπριακά σχολεία; Δυστυχώς η πρώτη και τελευταία αναγνωριστική έρευνα, σχετικά με το φαινόμενο αυτό, έγινε το 2010 για την Κύπρο. Η έρευνα αυτή που έγινε ανάμεσα σε 46ν θέση στην Ευρώπη, η οποία δημοσιεύτηκε το 2016, τοποθετεί την Κύπρο στην 49η θέση στον δημόσιο τομέα και στην 44μη στην ιδιωτική. Καταλαμβάνει επίσης την τελευταία θέση στον δημόσιο τομέα και στην 44η στην ιδιωτική. Έρευνα αυτή που έγινε ανάμεσα σε 1645 μαθητές αναφέρει ότι 17% των κύπριων μαθητών έχουν εμπλακεί σε κάποιας μορφής εκφοβισμό και θυματοποίηση. Επισημαίνει ότι τα αγόρια είναι πιο ενεργά στον εκφοβισμό. Επίσης, τα μεγαλύτερα ηλικιακά αγόρια είναι περισσότερο εμπλεκόμενα. Ωστόσο αυτά τα δεδομένα σίγουρα δεν είναι αντιπροσωπευτικά 7 χρόνια μετά, καθώς η Κύπρος έχει υποστεί πολλές μεταβολές όπως π.χ. η οικονομική κρίση, έλευση πληθυσμού από εμπόλεμες περιοχές, υποδοχή πληθυσμού από ευρωπαϊκές χώρες κλπ. Δυστυχώς για τόσα χρόνια πλανιόμαστε στο άγνωστο με βάρκα την ελπίδα χωρίς οι αρμόδιες υπηρεσίες να αντιλαμβάνονται την σοβαρότητα της κατάστασης. Πολλά σχέδια του Υπουργείου Παιδείας για πάταξη του φαινομένου, βρίσκονται ακόμα προς συζήτηση εδώ και χρόνια ενώ κάποια άλλα ναυάγησαν οξύνοντας το γεγονός ότι το κυπριακό σύστημα μπάζει από πάνω.

Ένας φίλος κάποτε έχοντας κακές εμπειρίες από τον εκφοβισμό, μου περιέγραψε την τραυματική του εμπειρία και πραγματικά ήταν τρομαχτική. Αυτός ο φίλος μου ίσως να είμαι εσύ, ίσως να είσαι ο αδελφός σου, ο γιος σου, ο καλύτερός σου φίλος ή οποιοσδήποτε άλλος ξέρεις και αγαπάς. Νομίζω ήρθε ο καιρός για αναθεώρηση των πραγμάτων όσο αφορά την παιδεία. Πιστεύω επίσης ότι η Κύπρος φιλοξενεί λαμπρά πανεπιστημιακά ιδρύματα και εξαίρετους επιστήμονες που δεν αξιοποιούνται στο μέγιστο. Τα προβλήματα δεν λύνονται με την άρνηση της ογκόλες.
Do you know what Special Olympics are?

WRITTEN BY:  
Georgia Zachariou  
BSc in Psychology

Special Olympics is the world’s largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, providing year-round training and competitions to 5.7 million athletes and Unified Sports partners in 172 countries. Special Olympics competitions are held every day, all around the world including local, national and regional competitions, adding up to more than 100,000 events a year.

In June 1962, Eunice Kennedy Shriver started a day camp called Camp Shriver for children with intellectual disabilities at her home in Potomac, Maryland. She started this camp because she was concerned about children with intellectual disabilities having nowhere to play, so that they could benefit from sports activities. Using Camp Shriver as an example, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who was head of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation and part of President John F. Kennedy’s Panel on Mental Retardation, promoted the concept of involvement in physical activity and other opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities. Camp Shriver became an annual event, and the Kennedy Foundation (of which Eunice became director in 1957) gave grants to universities, recreation departments and community centers to hold similar camps.

It was also in the early 1960s that Eunice Kennedy Shriver wrote an article in the Saturday Evening Post, revealing that her sister Rosemary, also President John F. Kennedy’s sister, was born with intellectual disabilities. This frank article about the President’s family was seen as a «watershed» in changing public attitudes toward people with intellectual
disabilities. Though Rosemary was born with intellectual disabilities, she had later undergone a lobotomy; the brain damage inflicted by the operation caused her to be permanently incapacitated. Shiver’s inspiration for Special Olympics came from Rosemary’s disability with overall vision that people with intellectual disabilities could compete and unify the public that come from all different walks of life. It has often been said that Rosemary’s disability was Eunice’s inspiration to form Special Olympics (as the movement came to be called), but she told The New York Times in 1995 that that was not exactly the case. «The games should not focus on one individual,» she said.

Cyprus Special Olympics were established in 1986. They are members of the Special Olympics International and the Cyprus Olympic Committee. They are recognized by the Cyprus Olympic Committee, as the sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities. They are a non-profit organization and its activities are carried out with the voluntary offer of their members.

The expenses for the organization and participation of athletes in various activities, both in Cyprus and abroad, are covered by sponsorships of the Cyprus Sports Organization, the Cyprus Police Torch Run and other private companies and organizations.

Today, Cyprus Special Olympics have expanded throughout Cyprus. Over 500 athletes with mental retardation and intense learning problems are trained in Classic Sports, Swimming, Cycling, Soccer, Basketball, Rhythmic and Instrumental Gymnastics, Bowling, Floor Hockey, Skiing and Physical Handicapping (MATR). They have also begun to develop unified sports, with the participation of individuals outside Special Olympics in Football and Basketball.

Completing their 25-year presence in Cyprus, thanks to the Governing Council’s tireless efforts, the state’s sensitivity, the annual sponsorship of the CMO and the continued support of donors and volunteers, the Special Olympics of Cyprus have made important changes, both in the awareness of the community, as well as creating conditions for equal opportunities in society. Our athletes have managed to make us nationally proud of all the events that have taken place, winning both in Europe and worldwide.

It was one of best experience in my life to be a volunteer in the Special Olympics. Since 2014 every year I take part in them. The smiles, the hugs that I get those days, the feeling that someone loves you and you don’t have to give something back is priceless. On one of those days, a small boy that couldn’t talk came to me and hugged me because I helped him run and thus he won the race. Afterwards he gave me his gold medal as a sign of gratitude.

If you want to become a volunteer for 2018 contact 22449848/9 or send an email to: info@specialolympics.com.cy

Special Olympics Cyprus Open 2018
Date: June 17, 2018
Venue: Elea Estate GC
Organizer: CGF
Last Entry Date: June 16, 2018
Format: Stable ford
“Mind the Mind - To combat the stigma of mental disorders” Campaign

WRITTEN BY:
Eleni Anastasiou
BSc in Psychology –Alumni
Local Coordinator of “Mind the Mind – To Combat the Stigma of Mental Disorders”

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), one in four people in the world will be affected by a mental or neurological disorder at some point in their lives. Approximately 450 million people suffer from these conditions, making mental disorders one of the leading causes of ill-health and disability in the world (WHO, 2001). Specifically, depression is one of the most common mental disorders. More than 300 million people suffer from depression, and it is expected that these numbers will rise in the near future.

Despite the fact that there are effective treatments for depression, and other mental disorders, fewer than half of those affected in the world receive appropriate treatment, psychological assistance, psychotherapy, or counselling. Also, although there are many barriers to effective care, social stigma associated with mental disorders is one of the main reasons why people with mental disorders often do not seek psychological help. But, what is the stigma of mental illness? Stigma is when negative qualities are associated to a mental illness/ disorder. For instance, a person with a mental disorder may be wrongly viewed either by other people or the person himself or herself as “weak” or “damaged”, and this may result in feelings of shame and/or embarrassment in people with a mental illness. Consequently, this may prevent the person from seeking psychological support. In Cypriot culture, a strong social stigma is still associated with mental disorders. Hence, there is a vital need to educate young Cypriots, and general public about mental illness, and its stigma. But how can we really make a change? Education is the key! Raising awareness about mental illness and the stigma surrounding it can be achieved through different modes of education.

“Mind the Mind – To Combat the Stigma of Mental Disorders” is a social campaign organised by the European Federation of Psychology Students’ Associations (EFPSA) and its Social Impact Initiative team (SII). The SII team aims to make use of psychological knowledge in order to positively impact the society. The campaign’s aim is to educate secondary level students, along with the general public about mental health, mental illness, and the stigma associated with it. As young volunteers, we aim to tackle common misconceptions about people with mental disorders. In this way, we can make it more likely that people with mental disorders will seek appropriate psychological help. The campaign has been implemented in more than 20 European countries during the last three years with great success. This is the first time that Cyprus is participating in the campaign and we hope that it will be implemented successfully. The campaign is organised in a structured manner, involving “Local Coordinators” within different European countries, who are responsible for organising the campaign on a local level. However, in order to implement the campaign, we need the help and support of motivated volunteers. The volunteers are psychology students, who will carry out the workshops at schools and organisations. These workshops will consist of videos, interactive games, role-plays, and will take place between December 2017 and May 2018. By implementing the campaign on a local level, we hope to raise awareness, increase empathy, and compassion about an issue that we should all care about.

You can support the campaign by liking “Mind the Mind” page on Facebook. #mental_health #combat_the_stigma_of_mental_disorders #mind_the_mind.

For more information concerning the campaign, EFPSA and its SII team, you can visit the following links: http://www.efpsa.org/social-impact/activities/, http://www.efpsa.org/ and http://www.efpsa.org/social-impact/. Also, you can email the Cypriot Local Coordinators at: mtmcampaigncyprus@gmail.com.

Sources: WHO, 2001
Σκέφτηκες ποτέ;

ΓΡΑΦΕΙ:
Έλενα Αναστασίου
Πτυχίο Ψυχολογίας

Σκέφτηκες ποτέ, πόσες ευκαιρίες σου προσφέρονται καθημερινά για να κάνεις τη ζωή σου πιο όμορφη; Έχουμε κάθε λόγο να ανησυχούμε για στεναχώριες και προβλήματα, για όνειρα ανεκπλήρωτα και για επιθυμίες μας που δεν πραγματοποιήθηκαν, όμως κάθε φορά που αφίνουμε σκέψεις πικρές να πλακώσουν την ψυχή μας, είναι σαν να κλείνουμε τα παράθυρα και να βυθιζόμαστε σε βαθύ σκοτάδι. Άσε την καρδιά σου να χαρεί το φως που έρχεται με τον ήλιο της αυγής. Άνοιξε τα κλειστά παράθυρα και μια ευωδία αισιοδοξίας θα σε πλημμυρίσει. Ζήσε στο φως κι οι χτύποι της καρδιάς σου θα ‘ναι ειρηνικοί, το πνεύμα σου ήσυχο και η θέλησή σου πιο ισχυρή από ποτέ. Ξέχασε για λίγο όλα τα αρνητικά και κοίταξε τις ευκαιρίες που σου προσφέρονται καθημερινά μέσα από τα πιο απλά και συνηθισμένα πράγματα. Ένα χαμόγελο, μια λέξη γλυκιά, μια αγκαλιά και μια ευχή από την καρδιά μπορούν να διώξουν την ένταση, το άγχος και τη θλίψη της κάθε μέρας. Μάθε επιτέλους ότι σε αυτό τον κόσμο ήρθαμε όλοι μας για να είμαστε ο εαυτός μας. Ο καθένας είναι διαφορετικός και μοναδικός στο είδος του! Η ζωή είναι τόσο σύντομη για να
ασχολούμαστε με τους άλλους. Έχουμε αυτό το σώμα, αυτό το πρόσωπο, αυτό το μυαλό για ένα λόγο... ας μάθουμε να τα χρησιμοποιούμε σωστά και να τα αγαπάμε! Να αγαπάμε και να σεβόμαστε το σώμα, το πρόσωπο, το μυαλό και τα πάντα πάνω μας χωρίς να θέλουμε να μοιάσουμε ή να φτάσουμε κάποιον άλλον.

Αν μπορούσαμε να αφήσουμε τον εαυτό μας να αντιληφθεί πόσο θλιβερή είναι η κακία, ίσως να μπορούσαμε να αγαπάμε μίγο περισσότερο τον εαυτό μας, τον συνανθρώπο μας και τελικά να γίνουμε πνευματικά υγιείς και ανώτεροι, γιατί η ανωτερότητα είναι το καλύτερο είδος πνευματικής υγείας. Ο ανώτερος ισαρχής είναι δημιουργικός, δεν συγκρίνει τον εαυτό του με τους άλλους, αγαπά, ενθαρρύνει τους γύρω του διογκώνοντας τα θετικά τους· έχει πίστη, ελπίδα, ευγνωμοσύνη, δεν φοβάται την αποτυχία και πάνω απ’ όλα σέβεται την ομορφιά του, σε αντίθεση με τους ασεβείς ανθρώπους που ανταγωνίζονται, μισούν, ζηλεύουν και μειώνουν τους άλλους γιατί δεν μπορούν να αντέξουν το αίσθημα της ανωτερότητάς τους! Ας μάθουμε λοιπόν, να σεβόμαστε και να αγαπάμε τον εαυτό μας όπως είναι!

Ξέρεις κάτι; Θα μπορούσαν να είχαν όλα τελειώσει χθες, όμως βλέπεις για ακόμη μα μα ωρά τη φως της μέρας, ένα θαύμα που συχνά δεν εκτιμούμε! Κάθε καινούρια μέρα έχει απέραντη αξία, ένα στιγμή την ευκαιρία να αλλάξεις τη ζωή σου προς το καλύτερο! Το σήμερα είναι μια μεγάλη ευκαιρία! Μην βάλεις το δάχτυλό σου στις πληγές του χεριού, και μην χαθείς στην αβεβαιότητά σου! Κάθε καινούρια μέρα είναι μια ευκαιρία! Κάθε καινούρια μέρα είναι μια ευκαιρία! Πάνω απ’ όλα σέβεται την ομορφιά του, σε αντίθεση με τους απεριορισμένους ανθρώπους που μειώνουν τους άλλους γιατί δεν μπορούν να αντέξουν το αίσθημα της ανωτερότητάς τους! Ας μάθουμε λοιπόν, να σεβόμαστε και να αγαπάμε τον εαυτό μας όπως είναι!

Έχουμε αυτό το σώμα, αυτό το πρόσωπο, αυτό το μυαλό για ένα λόγο... ας μάθουμε να τα χρησιμοποιούμε σωστά και να τα αγαπάμε! Ας μάθουμε λοιπόν, να σεβόμαστε και να αγαπάμε τον εαυτό μας όπως είναι!
Epigenetic marks-A second DNA ID?

WRITTEN BY:
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We all have an ID. In biological terms, our DNA is our ID as we have all heard the phrase “it is written in your DNA”.

What if our DNA is really not one, but two IDs?

According to Watson and Crick since 1953, the DNA, the blueprint of life, is widely known to be the molecule that carries the genetic code, a series of nucleotides or letters like CAGT that is unique to all individuals as we inherit it from our parents. That specific order of nucleotides determines the color of our hair, our uniqueness, our facial features and at the molecular level which genes could be switched on in order to ‘give birth’ to proteins, complex molecules that stimulate many biological actions to carry out life functions. Apparently, this is not the whole story because all of our cells contain exactly the same genetic material but various organs and tissues among the body have different characteristics that enable them to carry out different functions. For instance, the brain cells express proteins that should be expressed only by brain cells, they do not express proteins that are found in stomach or liver cells. So, what is really happening at the molecular level?

Have you ever imagined that there might be a second layer of information hidden on our DNA?

Epigenetics is the science of heritable changes and the epigenetic code refers to all the chemical modifications that
Take place on the DNA, affecting the function of genes without changing the sequence of nucleotides. The Greek prefix epi- in epigenetics implies features that are “on top of” the traditional genetic basis for inheritance (Ledford, 2008). In reality, all those epigenetic changes are a set of different chemical groups which are added by specific ‘architecture-like-enzymes’ on different proteins like histones or on specific sites on the DNA during different developmental stages. Examples of mechanisms that produce such changes are DNA methylation and histone modification, each of which alters how genes are expressed without altering the underlying DNA sequence (Bird, 2007). When those ‘epigenetic jewellery’ are added on the DNA, they either pack the DNA into a more condensed form or unpack it by relaxing the chromatin structure resulting in this way to either gene silencing (some genes “go to sleep”) or gene expression.

Moreover, twin studies showed that the epigenetic status is affected and induced by various environmental factors such as diet, lifestyle, stress, exposure to chemicals. More specifically, monozygotic twins that were born with the same epigenetic status as they got older they were found to have different epigenetic modifications (Fraga et al., 2012). Lastly, the interaction of those ‘chemicals groups’ with our DNA could be associated with the generation of certain diseases like Alzheimer’s, cancer, obesity, anxiety, depression as well could affect our sexuality, behavior - Why are some of us more sociable than others? - our height or be the molecular cause behind the addiction and fear conditioning. Since epigenetics marks make us unique, could they be considered our second DNA ID?

REFERENCES


There was a boy, a very strange boy, who travelled very far to find himself. The boy was set on a path to try to find the meaning of life and pursue the so-called state of happiness.

On his journey to find himself, he found himself crossing a large and dark forest. He tried to walk in there carefully, having in mind the possibility of losing his way out of there. If he only knew that the forest was enchanted. Scared and alone as he was, he kept his pace through the forest, hoping to find a way out, or at least a main path leading to a civilization. It was not until a wonderful creature made its presence behind a huge rock. It was a shy girl with big and beautiful capturing eyes. If he had only known that the girl was a witch.

Eventually he fell in love with her. Together, they created a house on a large, large tree; a magical treehouse, specifically, with a ladder made of golden ropes, a large field around the tree for seeds to be grown, and a cute fireplace with a really tall chimney. There were other treehouses there, but none like their own. The light of the sky rarely sneaked in the house, but that was OK for the boy. The light in his girls’ eyes was all that he needed. The boy was happy, or at least he thought he was.

One day, he said to the beautiful witch that he was going
out to find wood for the fireplace. He walked away that day, as if something inside him was telling him to get out that forest. He moved away, without realizing it, and the forest behind him was getting smaller in shape. He somehow knew that there is a chance he wasn’t getting back there. His heart hurt by the idea that he might lose his way and that he will not see his girl’s eyes again. He kept his pace away from the enchanted forest, as if he was sleep-walking. As he was walking away the enchanted forest, the paths changed their shape. He thought that he was hallucinating but whatever it was, the paths were now moving, just like the shape of the snake when it tries to get away from danger. Suddenly he found himself in the middle of crossed paths in a place with trees and heavy plantation. He looked around but there was not a certain path to follow. The sky changed its color from light blue to dark orange. The sun was sinking to the horizon, as if behind the horizontal line there was a giant orange-eyed monster about to devour the helpless sun. The trees around him were growing taller and taller, and their roots started to appear. They were moving upwards with the speed of an express train, and their roots where shaking and changing the ground violently. The trees seemed like they were forming a circle above the boy, and their tips started to join together, covering the sky like dark colored curtains. Everything around him seemed like a magical dance. Not a soul was near him. He was alone, scared, terrified of the whole scene and did not have a solid explanation for what was going on. He thought he was
losing his mind. There was nothing to grab or shout out for help. He came down on his knees and started sobbing. He closed his eyes and prayed to God for help.

When he opened his eyes, a path formed in front of him – the shaking paths where finally tuned. Everything around the boy was covered in a dark cloud, the tops of these large trees seemed like ghosts in the sky. The deep smell of a freshly watered land was intense and created a sense of terror to the boy. The boy’s breath was forming tiny clouds from the freezing cold weather, and the sound from the wind going through the gaps of the trees seemed like long howling from a pack of wolves.

The boy fixed his gaze on the path, which was brighter than the colors around him and finally found the strength and courage to stand up, and move. He remembered the beautiful eyes of the witch as if they were speaking to him, the voices of his loved ones were revolving around his mind, as if the memory of them gave them form and were next to him at that hour.

He was walking to the path, and as he was walking, the path detached itself from the ground and was flying upwards, just like a magic carpet. He stopped walking, but he was still moving, as if the path had its own mind. He had faith that whatever in nature this was, that it will get him to a safe place. The path finally landed, and the boy continued walking the now merged path on the ground.

The boy was set to a certain journey on a path that was tuned to him. He chose to take it. He could have stayed there in the middle of nowhere under those huge trees and the broken ground being horrified and helpless.

Now, the boy is set on another path, being grateful that he was intact and that his prayer was heard. He was thankful of the memories of his loved ones, and this experience finally made him believe in his own self. The boy continued a path, and was mindful of the extraordinary events of his past. Every time he was struggling on a problem, he reframed it to become a challenge. Even more, he saw the challenge as a lesson to become a better man. He refined his patience, he became more focused on his spiritual goal, more faithful to a wise entity who governs the world, and realized the importance of love. He was trying to become a better man – a decent and difficult pursuit.

When this boy, who now became a man was walking down a trail where he met a lost boy. Seeing the confusion and pain in the eyes of the other boy he felt the need to offer his assistance. They sat down and talked, and this is what he said to him: “Be patient. Have faith to God who is to love, and strive to become a better version of yourself every day. This way, the path will reveal itself to you my little friend. Never stop searching for your hidden treasures. The greatest thing you’ll ever know is just to love and be loved in return. I had the opportunity to love and be loved in return and I was grateful for this. This experience will stay with me forever. I was loved by my friends, and I was grateful for this because their company gave me a sense of warmth and belonging. I was protected from the teachings and the love of my parents, and I was grateful for this because they were always there where I really wanted them – a shoulder or a hug to lean on. When I was lost and when the world seemed to crumble around me and beneath my feet, I had faith that this is an experience that will stay with me once I survive it. I prayed, and I am grateful of all the disasters in my life for they taught me valuable lessons. Lessons of trying to become a more virtuous, patient and better person. Wherever the path gets you, and whatever obstacles it throws your way, never lose hope my boy. Stay strong, and the path will be revealed to you”.

The boy nodded, and his eyes filled with tears as if they were coming from the streams of his heart. The man’s words echoed in the walls of the little boy’s heart just like the vibrations of music on an empty space on a top hill. He shook the boy’s hand, who was now a man. They hugged strongly and the boy thanked the wise man and went off his way to the endless horizon, with the sun sitting on it, as if it was sitting on a royal throne. The man stood there in the middle of the path and was looking at the boy, whose small figure was shrinking away until he was lost to the golden horizon.
Meal Timing and Intermittent Fasting: Does it really matter?

WRITTEN BY:
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Nowadays, timing rules everything. Timing may either cost you to miss your bus or to get a promotion. During a heart attack, timing may save your life, or not. Time is of great essence, but what exactly is “timing”? Timing by definition is the regulation of occurrence or a coordination, in order to achieve a desired effect. In nutritional sciences, timing seems to modify health status by affecting a wide range of physiological parameters. Examples of the practical application of nutritional timing are meals’ distribution, increased meal frequency throughout the day and the exactly opposite: Intermittent Fasting.

“Fasting” is determined by the voluntary abstinence from energy consumption (food and beverages that contain calories) for various time intervals. “Intermittent” has the meaning of doing something occasionally. Sounds familiar? Yes, it should be! Ramadan is a form of Intermittent Fasting and it is very well studied. So, it goes without saying that even if it looks like a new nutritional trend, it has its roots deep in human history, since our ancestors had not the convenience of eating every three hours.

New or old trend, we have first to answer a big question that many people have. In terms of nutrition, what does really matter? How much food do I consume, what kind of food do I consume or when do I need to consume it? Let me tell you that it is pretty sure that the amount of food and its quality counts most. That is because this fact will determine how much calories you consume and if you consume more than you burn, unfortunately you will gain weight; this is thermodynamics. But, I can hear you asking: “What about timing?” Let me tell you.

Recently, several fasting protocols are under extent investigation to define its impact on human physiology. In literature, three fasting protocols are commonly studied, with each of them consisting of various periods of feeding and fasting.

1. “Alternate-day fasting”: describes alternations between ad libitum food intake and fasting days with very low food consumption.
2. “Whole day fasting”: consists of a few (1-2) days per week, in which individuals are completely fasting, while in other days eat ad libitum.
3. “Time-restricted feeding”: involves feeding under a certain period every day (approximately 8h) with a certain number of fasting hours (approximately 12h).

All these protocols show numerous health benefits in clinical practice. Adapting one of the intermittent fasting protocols, showed a reduction in abdominal fat, blood pressure and increase in insulin sensitivity (1,2). In clinical population, after 2 months of alternate day fasting, inflammatory markers of asthma patients reduced (3). Beneficial effects found on patients with rheumatoid arthritis (4) and hypertension (5), while a short-time adaption of a Ramadan seems to be beneficial for plasma lipoprotein profile (6,7). However, taking a closer look at the methodology, one may ask:
a) these studies are not well controlled in order to match caloric intake and
b) they referred to clinical population, what about healthy adults?

The answer comes from a newly published paper on the effect of Intermittent Fasting in resistance-trained adults (8). These individuals followed an Intermittent Fasting or regular meal patterns for 8 weeks, after matching for energy intake (how much they ate). The Intermittent Fasting group ate its meals from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. and the other group ate its meals from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m, while both ate approximately the same. Researchers observed a decrease in fat mass in Intermittent Fasting group, without losing strength or muscles. Furthermore, Intermittent Fasting group showed better glycemic control, slightly improved lipidemic profile and inflammatory markers.

Intermittent Fasting is not a new nutritional trend, rather an old one. There are many studies that support its beneficial effects on health and many more to come. Although, Intermittent Fasting is not panacea for everything and for example it would be strongly recommended not to be followed from individuals with gastroesophageal reflux disease. To sum all these up, in my honest opinion, there are many variables that more or less affect nutritional status and health. Timing is one of them and... timing matters!

Take home messages:
• There are many Intermittent Fasting protocols.
• The most investigated Intermittent Fasting protocol is a daily eating pattern in which all nutrient consumption is taking place within a few hours (<12hr) every day.
• There are findings that Intermittent Fasting is beneficial...
The first thing that matters is what and how much food you eat (or drink).

The second thing that matters—but really matters—is timing.

References


Η ανάγκη γεννά την ιστορία

ΓΡΑΦΕΙ:
Παρασκευή Χριστοδούλου
Πτυχίο Διεθνών Σχέσεων και Ευρωπαϊκών Σπουδών

Έχεις δει ποτέ σου έναν άνθρωπο; Όλοι μας λένε από το νηπιαγωγείο ότι είναι καλό να έχουμε φίλους, να ενταχθούμε στην κοινωνία, να μιλάμε με όλους και να τα πηγαίνουμε καλά με τους πάντες. Κι αυτό, μέχρι να εμφανίστε μια διαφορά ανάμεσα σε εμάς και στους άλλους. Κι εκεί που κάθεσαι φιλαράκι μου μια χαρά, να σου λένε ότι δεν σε καταλαβαίνουν, να μιλάς και να μην υπάρχεις, να μιλάς και να μην ακούγεσαι καθόλου, να ζεις για τους άλλους και να νιώθεις ότι σε αποβάλλει η κοινωνία.

Εκείνα ακριβώς τη στιγμή, ξέρεις ότι βλέπεις μόνο ανθρώπους. Ότι δε θα σε κάνουν όπως θέλουν, γιατί επιλέγεις εσύ πώς θα ζήσεις. Περνάς από τη σχολική πλεικά σιωπώντας και σε βλέπουν σαν απειλή. Πού να ‘ξεραν, αν άνοιγες το στόμα σου να μιλήσεις τι ποταμούς θα μπορούσες να χύσεις στις καρδιές των συμμαθητών σου; Κι όμως το έχεις κάνει για τους άλλους. Μίλησες για τους άλλους, για να τους δώσεις μια άλλη φωνή. Τους αθώωσες μέσα σου. Μετά τους υπερασπίστηκες δυναμικά και δυνατά. Ηξέρες ότι το άξιζαν και το άξιζαν κι εσύ. Εκεί μετράς ανθρώπους. Εκεί κερδίζες χαμόγελα για βραβεία.

Εσύ όμως θα έθελες να γίνεις; Δε γίνεται να διαλέγεις μόνο τους ομόιους σου. Κοίτα αυτούς που είναι γύρω σου. Σε έχει πει κανένας άρρωστο ή άρρωστη επειδή είσαι εσύ; Να το χαίρεσαι. Σε χαίρονται, γιατί τους επιτρέπεις να είναι εσύ. Μεγάλο πράγμα να νιώθουν τόση ελευθερία οι άνθρωποι. Ναι, κι εγώ βγαίνω εξώ. Τώρα τελευταία το έχω ανάγκη. Λες να γράφουν πολλοί, ενώ είναι κι άλλοι δυο τρεις μέσα σε μια καφετέρια; Πού δε μιλούν συνεχώς για ανοησίες, για μικρότητες, για πληγές ή, αν θες, να μιλάνε μόνο για ανθρώπους. Πήρες ποτέ σου το χέρι ενός μικρού ανθρώπου που έχασε το δρόμο του για να βρει το σπίτι του; Έχεις απλώσει ποτέ την καρδιά σου κάτω ενώ ήξερες πως θα την ποδοπατήσουν; Είδες ποτέ την αγκαλιά, ή μια αγκαλιά; Εκεί να δεις ανθρώπους με ιστορία και παρελθόν. Έχεις αποδειχτεί άνθρωπος αλλά και διαφορετικός, σαν να έχεις αποδειχτεί και άλλος.

Πήρες ποτέ σου το χέρι ενός μικρού ανθρώπου που έκανε το δρόμο του για να βρει το σπίτι του; Έχεις επιλέξει ποτέ την καρδιά σου κάτω ενώ ήξερες πως θα την ποδοπατήσουν; Είδες ποτέ την αγκαλιά, ή μια αγκαλιά; Εκεί να δεις ανθρώπους με ιστορία και παρελθόν. Έχεις υπολογίσει ποτέ την ανάγκη για να ζήσεις και να το ζήσεις και να το ζήσεις και να το ζήσεις και να το ζήσεις. Καφετέριες αλλά και πολλά άλλα. Είσαι άνθρωπος ή θα ήθελες να γίνεις; Δε γίνεται να διαλέγεις μόνο τους ομόιους σου. Κοίτα αυτούς που είναι γύρω σου. Σε χαίρεντας ή ήξερες πως θα την ποδοπατήσουν; Είδες ποτέ την αγκαλιά, ή μια αγκαλιά; Εκεί να δεις ανθρώπους με ιστορία και παρελθόν. Έχεις αποδειχτεί άνθρωπος αλλά και διαφορετικός, σαν να έχεις αποδειχτεί και άλλος.
συνήθεια ξαπλώνεις σε ένα μαλακό κρεβάτι, όπως κι εγώ τώρα, πίστευτε με, μια νύχτα στο πάρκο καθισμένος με μια κουβέρτα ως το πρωί, σου προκαλεί έναν πόνο στα κόκκαλά, που δεν μπορείς να αντέξεις τις πρώτες μέρες. Μετά το συνήθιζες. Τουλάχιστον έτσι μου είπαν.

Πες μου λοιπόν; Είδες παππού από τα ζεστά του τζάκια, που έκτιζε με τόσο κόπο ένα τσαρδάκι για το «κορίτσι του» -έτσι έλεγε η γυναίκα του- να το σκάει από τις βόμβες ξαφνικά;

Πριν καιρό άκουσα το ακόλουθο τραγούδι:

Είδα στον ύπνο μου!

Στίχοι : Ελένη Σιούφτα
Μουσική / Ερμηνεία : Παντελής Θαλασσινός
Από τον δίσκο " 10 Τραγούδια στης Ελπίδας ", Είδα στον ύπνο μου θηρία μεθυσμένα, γυμνό το σώμα μου, με μάτια γερασμένα, τοπίο ανάποδο η ζωή που δεν την έζησα, λίγο στο δρόμο της περπάτησα και έσβησα...

ERMONA Πirectional ελεύθερη συνένζυμη εφαρμογή για την ελληνική γλώσσα.
Why Digital Marketing is a must for organizations?

WRITTEN BY:
Pantelis Georgiou
MBA - Alumni
Business Administration Phd - Candidate

With the transformation of modern technologies the world is rapidly evolving towards a more digital approach. People are consuming electronic content faster every day. Organizations and individuals in general are recognizing the significance of going digital. It is vital to mention that all the successful marketing departments are trying to adapt fast to the new era by hiring professionals in the field of Digital Marketing.

According to Digital Marketing Institute, the world’s leading digital marketing and selling professional certification body, Digital Marketing also known as Online Marketing, Internet Marketing or Web marketing is a collective name for marketing activity carried out online, as opposed to traditional marketing activity. This procedure is often carried out through print media, live promotions, TV or radio ads. Digital Marketing describes how organizations advertise to customers through the use of computers, tablets, smart phones and mobile phones. The most common forms of digital marketing is: SEO (Search Engine Optimization), Blogs, Online advertising, Email Marketing, Social media, Mobile marketing and Analytics.

Why Digital Marketing?

1) Digital Marketing VS Traditional Marketing

In comparison with traditional Marketing, Digital marketing is more cost effective. The new media is providing businesses with a cheaper and more effective means of communication and advertising channels.

2) Higher ROI and Revenue

Digital Marketing gives you the ability to see the results of specific advertising campaigns and helps determine and predict what is not ideal for the organization. This helps eliminate the costs of traditional advertising.

3) Earn customers trust and loyalty

Customers nowadays are seeking specific businesses through social media. People use this as a way of observing business activity and seeing what other customers have to say about it. Many big organizations are engaging their customers with real-time online conversations. Additionally, when it comes to consumer services, customers tend to rely on the internet first, hoping to avoid any unnecessary lengthy phone calls with the service hotlines. A recent study claimed that 75% of US mobile shoppers prefer the use of online chat instead of calling to speak with an agent. However, 60% are willing to abandon their shopping online and never make a purchase again from a specific retailer if they experience a poor customer service.

4) Ahead of Competitors

A significant number of organizations have completely changed their traditional advertising methods and focus on using Google “AdWords”, Google Analytics, SEO and Social Media. Google Alerts help businesses bring the best ideas to surface in order to see where competition stands. These help marketing managers think proactively for their next marketing campaign strategy and therefore align their plans accordingly.

5) Target Mobile Consumers

Smartphones today have replaced the use of personal computer and laptops. Based on a new research, 91% of adults in the US always have their devices within reaching distance, while more than 25% of smartphone users are making purchases online. Furthermore, 84% of small businesses who have invested in a mobile presence say that they see immediate and long-term benefits.

These are only some of the benefits that Digital Marketing can provide to a business.

Technology along with Digital Marketing are evolving in our everyday life. So, in order for business to grow, be profitable and also to survive, it is a must to adapt and exploit the digital environment as much and as fast as possible.
There’s nothing like the sight of a freshly baked batch of brownies. And not just for those of us with a sweet tooth. Most people — well, the fun ones — are brownie fans, which is why we see them everywhere, from office parties to birthdays to school lunches. Rich to the hilt and unapologetically messy, a great brownie is savored slowly, with your eyes closed.

And while there may be no such thing as a “bad” brownie, the best ones are truly memorable.

Cocoa, butter, sugar, flour and eggs, mixed together and baked in a pan. Simple as they may appear, there is a definite chemistry behind a great brownie recipe.

Over the last few weeks, I tested close to a dozen brownie recipes from a variety of sources both old and new. Some recipes call for chocolate, others use cocoa powder — and still others incorporate both. And while recipes vary in the amounts of butter and sugar they use, one of the biggest variables is flour, with older recipes calling for a larger ratio of flour to other ingredients, making for a more “cake-like” brownie. Newer recipes have reduced flour, some to the point of almost eliminating it, resulting in more fudge-like brownies.

**Ingredients:**

185 gr unsalted butter (Kerrygold)
1 cup flour
2 cups sugar
1 cup cocoa (Cadbury)
1 teaspoon Vanilla extract
4 eggs
Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 180° C. Lightly grease a 23 x 4 cm round pan and line it with parchment paper, leaving at least 3 cm of overhang on the sides.

2. Combine the butter and cocoa in a pot and mix until the mixture is fully melted and combined.

3. In another bowl combine the flour, sugar and the vanilla sugar. Then add the eggs in the middle and combine them (don’t overmix).

4. Combine both mixtures together. Stir just until blended.

5. Bake for 15 minutes. Depends on what kind of oven you have it might be needed 20 minutes.

6. Cool completely before cutting.

Notes: When i combine all the mixtures together, i usually count 50 stirs.

Extra Tips: How do you know when brownies are done? This handy guide will help you know exactly when your brownies are ready to come out of the oven!

The first toothpick (on the left) demonstrates what underdone or underbaked brownies look like.

The center toothpick is from a batch of brownies that are completely baked but not overdone. There is still a smear of brown color on the toothpick- but NO wet batter- and there are a few moist crumbs sticking to the toothpick after it comes out. These brownies are done!

The final toothpick on the right was inserted in an overbaked pan of brownies. It is completely clean, with no brown color and no moist crumbs. It’s so clean that you can’t really tell that you inserted it in a pan of brownies.
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