

“Dicourage” - The ability to do something that frightens others, but not yourself.

(The Creativity Suite, Episode 14)

Interview with Meital Raviv

Head of Fintech & Innovation, KPMG Israel

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With Fredrik Haren, The Creativity Explorer



Innovation experts learning from innovation experts.

What is it that makes some people do things that others would never dream about doing even if you paid them a million dollars? Like pick up a spitting cobra by its tail. Or jump out of an airplane in a parachute, or go up on stage to speak in front of 10 000 people without getting nervous.

Some might call it courage, and in some cases it is. But in many cases is something else. It's not courage. It's “dicourage”. Let me explain.

I learned about “dicourage” when I interviewed Meital Raviv, now Managing Director Fintech and Innovation at KPMG Israel. Before that she was Head of Digital, Digital & Innovation division at Leumi, the biggest bank in the country. When Meital left Leumi many people thought that Meital was courageous to leave such a great job with great benefits, but Meital did not think she was courageous - she was just excited about getting an opportunity to work with a more global company.

The word “courage” means “the ability to do something that frightens one.”

So if you are terrified of snakes and go and pick one up you have courage. You did something even though you were afraid of it. But what if picking up a snake does not scare you at all? Then what should we call the act of grabbing it?

Some people might call you ignorant, stupid or naive for not feeling fear when handling a poisonous snake, but many snake experts would object to that description. They love snakes and are just not scared of them. So when they pick the snake up they do not show courage - since courage meant to “do something that frightens one”.

They do not see the need to show courage - because they are not afraid. They simply do something that a lot of OTHER people find scary.

Instead of showing courage they show, what I choose to call: Dicourage. The “cor-“ in courage comes from the Latin meaning “heart” as in “ you are feeling fear in your heart but do it anyway”. So I picked the word “dicourage” to describe how there are (at least) two hearts (di-courage) involved when someone does something that others find scary. (Please note that it is different from “discourage”- with an “s”.)

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Some people are scared to death about seeing blood, some people are not bothered about it at all. The second group is not showing courage if they go and attend to a bleeding person. They show “dicourage”.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health in the USA 73% of people suffer from glossophobia, ie the fear of public speaking. Many are petrified of going up on stage to speak. I make a living from professional speaking, and even if I can feel a bit nervous once in a while when I go up on stage, I am not afraid of it.

When people hear that the largest group I have ever spoken to is 400,000 people they often say “Oh, that must have taken so much courage!” - but I was excited to get a chance to speak to so many people when I walked up on that stage - not scared. (The speech was for The Global Leadership Summit and it was 10,000 people live and 390,000 people via video link.)

The vast majority of people would be petrified. I was not. So I did something that most people think takes a lot of courage, but since I did not feel fear it wasn't courageous of me.

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I think we all have this ability to show “dicourage”, we just have the ability in different areas.

So why is it important to be familiar with the concept of dicourage? Because when you realise that there is an area where you do not feel fear when others do, then that means you have found an area that you easily can excel in.

Very often this area is something that people are not even aware of. Since they are not afraid of X, they tend to find it hard to understand, or even believe, that others can get scared of just thinking of doing X. I still find it hard to understand how public speaking can be such a strong fear for so many people. I am sure a snake charmer finds it hard to understand why I, and many others, find snakes so uncomfortable.

Can you identify an area where many people feel afraid or uncomfortable but where you just feel joy? That might just be your superpower. Use it. Take advantage of it.

That is just what Meital Raviv did. While many in her surroundings thought leaving a big, established bank took courage, for Meital it was just a fun and exciting challenge to start a new career. While others might be stuck in a job they are “ok” with - or even miserable in - because they think switching industries takes courage that they do not have, Meital ended up with an even more exciting job than she had before.

That is the power of dicourage. How are you going to use it to your advantage?



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The Creativity Suite consists of a series of interviews with innovative C-suite managers and innovation leaders from around the world on how they develop their own creativity and the creativity of others. It's all about innovation experts learning from innovation experts. The Creativity Suite is a project by Fredrik Haren - The Creativity Explorer.

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