# Madness = Creativity

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MANY ingenious persons in history have been suspected of being mad, while many a madness has resulted in brilliant discoveries and performances. The two have been difficult to separate, becoming almost synonymous at times.

British psychiatrist Henry Maudsley (1835-1918) defines insanity as "a disorder of the brain producing disorder of the mind, a disorder of the supreme nerve-centres of the brain, a derangement of thought, feeling and action, together or separately, of such degree or kind as to incapacitate the individual for the relations of life". Some of you might call him mad or simply a genius.

Essentially, a creative person, most often blamed with mental disorder, is a lonely individual; his work shapes him so. He can hardly afford to be conventional when the avant-garde within him is striving to present to the world something that has never been seen or heard or known before. Many musicians and composers, painters and sculptors, architects and builders, inventors and discoverers... you name it, have been labelled mad because their task at hand compelled them to lead a lifestyle different from normal, if there is such a thing; normal, that is.

According to the Nigerian novelist, poet, and essayist Chinua Achebe, "Orthodoxy whether of the right or of the left is the graveyard of creativity." Scary, man!

One can hardly afford to be normal in perhaps the abnormal use of the word. "As soon as he ceased to be mad he became merely stupid. There are maladies we must not seek to cure because they alone protect us from others that are more serious," so argued Marcel Proust (1871-1922), the French novelist.

Yet these are the imaginative people, the creative persons, who have shaped the earth and moved us on over the centuries. They have been the silent engines of the earth. Ansel Adams has a nice way of putting it: "Millions of men lived to fight, build palaces and boundaries, shape destinies and societies; but the compelling force of all times has been the force of originality and creation, profoundly affecting the roots of human spirit."

Scottish psychiatrist R. D. Laing (1927-1989) joins him: "Madness need not be all breakdowns. It may also be a breakthrough. It is potential liberation and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death."

Creative persons are not born on demand. They emerge from time to time in different ages to bring to us the gifts of Allah; they are the talented ones.

And for those of us, who believe that the present is run by commercial enterprise alone or TV channels, and not perhaps by any measure of creative thinking, spare a moment for the thoughts of British advertising executive and author Andy Law who cracks a whip at them with the words, "Creativity can provide all the solutions to the complex problems of the workplace. Creative thinking is a positive, generative force that uses imagination to power business."

After so much inspiration what could Yours Truly do but get down to some serious thinking? And below follows the fruit of my farming.

Pssst! If you have any intention of making a name for yourself, don't follow me.

What, pray sacred soul, would be an automated vegetable? Motor shoti, for heaven's sake!
How about a cinematic fruit? Dub.
CNG vegetable? Bod-bodi.
Colourfully inviting fruit? Kam ranga
Confused fruit? Or-ange.
Digital fruit? Apple.
Embarrassed vegetable? Pea.
Family fruit? Nash pati.
Fashionable vegetable? Sho-sha.
Fatherly fruit? Papaya.
Feminine fruit? Cherry.
Fortunate fruit? Aa'm lucky.
French ghostly fruit? Le boo.
Get lost fruit? Foot. There is such a thing.
Hanging fruit? Lotka.
Inflated vegetable? Pumpkin.
IT vegetable? Data.
LBW fruit? Plum.
Long distance fruit? Sagar caller.
Loving fruit? Peara.
Master-of-none fruit? Jackfruit.
Mobile vegetable? Sim.
Musical fruit? Taal.
Old fruit? Jambura.
Oriental fruit? Cheena badam.
Playful vegetable? Catch kala.
Racial fruit? Sawfed-a.
Repenting fruit? Kiss miss.
Streetwise vegetable? Corolla.
Suggestive fruit? Bed ana.
Very ordinary fruit? Aam.
I think I'll stick to a strict diet of fish and meat for the next few days. ■