We welcome you to review a journey that began long back, perhaps when you were born, perhaps when you first became aware of an entity that you identified as yourself, your body.

Welcome to a reconsideration of this bodily voyage of learning that permeates our cognitive being each day that we live, a voyage that ends only in death (some would say even death is a temporary ending). Our book is about making sense of this journey that most of us as humans have been fortunate to have begun.

We begin this book with a focus on individual narrative descriptions of learning journeys in healthcare students/professionals, patients, their relatives and to break the tedium of an anthropocentric healthcare focus, even math and botany enthusiasts.

Most of these journeys document individual concrete experiences, their reflective observations, abstract conceptualizations and particular instances of their active experimentation.

For today's learner about health be it as patient or professional, new horizons are opening. New options for sharing the journey with others are emerging. With patient-professional access to Internet the world of “Health 2.0” empowers them to dive into a wealth of information on the diagnoses and therapy offered and received.

And not least: to join networks, relevant for particular diagnoses, locate other patients or professionals, with comparable problems, and exchange subjective narratives of personal patient or professional journeys through personal bloggings. This is the new – and global – noosphere: the soil, from which user-driven healthcare grows (K. Bjerg, personal communication, 2010).

It makes a difference if we conceive of patient journey in the sense of the narrow patient journey concept or in the sense of the wider patient journey concept of an individual explorer, whose life-journey earlier or later turns into travelling through pains and problems, encounters with medicine men, passage through admissions, tolls to be paid, - or not afforded -waiting times to be endured, encampment in more or less friendly healthcare institutions, undergoing tortures and sufferings, deprivations and starvations, uncertainties of outcomes, demands of endurance, and potential return to a continuation of previous life voyage, more or less radical change of life-course, or terminal more or less affordable more or less palliative terminal care (K. Bjerg, personal communication, 2010).

From the individual we move on to the collective and focus on learning trends gleaned from online search engines.

We may commiserate upon the ways technologies and gadgets are intruding into our lives, so widely necessary and adopted, making all of us dependant and vulnerable to the whims of engineers, commercial markets and administrations.
New kinds of vulnerabilities are growing upon the human species, not least as our pursuits and their waste is going to thread the ecosystem we share with other species.

Yet one of the prime reasons humans are likely to be device dependent for good is that they have always felt the need to be connected optimally and the new media (albeit device dependent) does inspire a feeling of connectivity that seems phenomenal in comparison to our recent past and that shows no signs of reducing for the moment.

This book is about a kind of human learning, which has always existed as a social process that currently seems to have been augmented in this new media driven wave of connectivity. This book explores how humans make faster learning associations utilizing the new social spider that cuts across barriers of time and space and traps learning in its web of persistent conversations, intersecting life trajectories and lived experiences displayed in flowing narrative.

We have built upon this framework of conversational learning by introducing conversations between readers after quite a few chapters and we hope it stimulates some readers who may even prefer to read the conversations prior to reading the chapters.

Finally all our work in this book of bringing together insights from hitherto undocumented perspectives from all stakeholders in healthcare will evolve further in the “International Journal of User Driven Health Care,” that has been launched recently with the Information Resources Management Association IRMA to accommodate the enthusiasm of authors and readers that overflowed while preparing this book. It can be accessed from the IGI global web site and we hope to continue this journey with our audience through their active participation in the journal and invite their fresh perspectives and continued feedback.

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