



FOREWORD

*“The farther backward you can look,
The farther forward you are likely to see!”*

- Winston Churchill

‘The Learning Curve’ is a masterly compilation of Dr Bhatoe’s memoirs encompassing his professional – medical and armed forces – and personal experiences interspersed with anecdotal details and episodes of professional and family life presented in a compulsively readable format.

The narrative begins with the logistic problems faced in appearing for the AFMC entrance test towards fulfilment of his dreams. The teaching and training at AFMC not only made him a trained professional but also inculcated in him a sense of discipline and patriotism, which were further honed during his stints with the parachute artillery regiment (The Seventeen) and the President’s Bodyguard, a fact I was not aware of. After successfully completing his training as a surgeon, the author takes us with him to Leh, where he was posted.

Dr Bhatoe joined PGIMER, Chandigarh in 1990 for training in Neurosurgery. It always is a trying period for a relatively senior army officer to work shoulder to shoulder with younger colleagues and change to a gruelling professional life irrespective of time or rest. It also disrupts the person’s family life, which almost all armed forces trainees adapt to very well, and Dr Bhatoe was no exception. He was exemplary during his training period and learnt well to diagnose and treat the problems appropriately with adequate respect the brain and the concept of timely surgery for optimal results. At the end of his training period he successfully negotiated the final examination and was awarded the degree of M Ch (Neurosurgery). Thereafter Dr Bhatoe pursued his neurosurgical career ardently in the armed forces. The next few chapters describe his experiences with various neurosurgical problems interspersed with interesting anecdotal instances from civilian and army life.

Dr Bhatoe is a great innovator and has described several modifications in surgical techniques. He is one of the pioneers of ‘keyhole’ (minimally invasive) surgery. At the same time he is an avid book lover, and has an exhaustive personal library of

both medical and non-medical books. He loves to write and has penned several books and written several articles, in addition to being the editor of a national medical journal. In addition he loves to travel, and has attended numerous national and international medical conferences.

Dr Bhatoe has devoted the last chapter to his family life – I wish he would have written more. It is a fact that neurosurgeons tend to neglect their families, but the author has adequately covered this aspect.

‘The Learning Curve’ is a very well chronicled autobiography of a successful neurosurgeon. It is written in a very readable format. It should be recommended for all institutional and personal libraries.

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