Carrying passion in a numerical world

*Qian Wang**

We are immersed in a world where success is quantified by numbers. Whether it's salaries, signing bonuses, social media metrics, or exposure frequencies, our evaluation systems have become obsessed with various indices. As researchers, our worth is frequently measured not by the creativity and impact of our work, but rather by the awards we receive, the dollar amounts of our grants, the number of publications we have, and the citations we accumulate. Likewise, as an editor, I find myself constantly reflecting on the most objective criteria for evaluating the success of our journal.

In 2022, a historic event unfolded within the science community. For the fifth time, an individual received the Nobel Prize for the second time. This outcome did not come as a surprise to those familiar with the current chemistry literature. Predictions had long circulated that Barry Sharpless would be honored with a second Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his groundbreaking invention of the concept of "Click Chemistry".[1] This concept, without exaggeration, has revolutionised organic chemistry, chemical biology, materials sciences, and related research fields.

Learning that Barry had indeed received this prestigious recognition filled me with uncontainable elation. It wasn't solely because Barry had been one of my mentors throughout my career development. Rather, it was the privilege of witnessing how the concept of Click Chemistry was initially ridiculed, gradually recognised, suddenly popularised, and ultimately worshipped by the science community. It underscored the power of philosophical scientific thinking and how the passion of one individual can transform an entire scientific community.[2]

Among my countless interactions with Barry, one encounter stands out vividly in my memory. It occurred at the atrium of the Backman building at the Scripps Research Institute. By chance, we crossed paths, and Barry approached me with his familiar enthusiasm, eager to discuss a recent discovery in his lab: a solvent-free reaction that forms amides from acids and amines. While this reaction procedure may seem practical and "cute," it is a common organic transformation taught in Organic Chemistry, typically performed in a solvent system with a catalyst. I was struck by Barry's unwavering passion for this research question. How could a world-renowned scientist and Nobel Laureate be genuinely excited about such a "trivial" experiment?

This incident brought to my mind Irving Stone's book, "*The Agony and the Ecstasy*," which powerfully portrays Michelangelo's devotion to sculpture. Stone eloquently states, "*For him, the milky white marble was a living, breathing substance that felt, sensed, judged. He could not permit himself to be found wanting. It was not fear but reverence. In the back of his mind, a voice said: 'This is love.'*"[3] Michelangelo's dedication stemmed from a profound passion that gave him the courage to challenge the prejudice against sculpture at his time beliefs and fulfill his ultimate destiny.

Yes, passion!

When discussing my expectations for graduate students, I often express my desire for them to have a passion for learning and a genuine interest in their projects. In a world fixated on numerical measures of success, it is crucial to reevaluate our standards and embrace the enduring power of passion. The story of Barry Sharpless and his unwavering excitement for a seemingly "trivial" experiment serves as a reminder that true greatness arises not from accolades or predictions, but from an unyielding love, an unyielding passion, for one's own work.

Nearly 3 years have passed since I joined the editorial team of Biomaterials Translational, providing a unique platform for our readers. We have overcome numerous challenges and endured the hardships posed by the coronavirus

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA

***Corresponding author:** Qian Wang, Wang263@mailbox.sc.edu.

http://doi.org/10.12336/biomatertransl.2023.02.001

How to cite this article: Wang, Q. Carrying passion in a numerical world. *Biomater Transl.* **2023**, *4*(2), 63-64.

disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. As I proudly serve in my role as an editor, I carry with me the profound impact of this journey and the understanding that success should not be reduced to mere numbers. Instead, it should be defined by the passionate pursuit of excellence.

In this issue of *Biomaterials Translational*, we provide one viewpoint essay,[4] two review papers[5, 6] and two research articles.[7, 8] As before, we hope these works can point the direction of this exciting research field.

Thank you for reading!

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