

# How greed affects all of us

Life



Society has always been made up of individuals pursuing their own separate interests. There has never been any communal attempt to achieve some sort of real substantial group goal aside from that of the creation of the society itself. In fact, the only reason that effort even came to be was simply because it made the obtainment of these separate interests easier, further proving the latter truth. This then poses the question, what really is greed? Since all action is undertaken by people because it is what they desire, wouldn't that make everyone greedy? This essay attempts to answer those questions through a number of different ways, but all come to the same conclusion, that all people are greedy by nature. And, with this knowledge, the ability to break down the negative connotations associated with greed in modern society. The importance of this can not be understated, considering understanding human behavior is key in creating a fully-functioning efficient society. As the next few paragraphs will show, greed is an inevitable feature of human life, and thus, to best understand how humans act amongst themselves and others the idea of real greed must be understood.

Greed has existed since the dawn of man and is certainly not specific to the modern day, however the definition of it has always varied between groups. Greed has been used in emotional, fiscal, mental and physical contexts and applies in an array of situations. The presentation of greed between people has also been highly variable as well, ranging from such historic figures as Mahatma Gandhi to Napoleon Bonaparte. Now these two leaders resemble a stark contrast between one another, but they both share at least some level of greed, no matter how it was presented. Gandhi, while humble and modest, had goals he hoped to complete, and made all his decisions based upon

those goals, making him self interested or in other words, greedy. Whereas Napoleon, with his confident and forceful approach, also expressed the same pursuit of his goals. By recognizing that both men, regardless of background and environment, each possess some level of greed and desire within them allows society to break down the stereotypes that surround the idea of greed itself.

Self-interest, avarice, desire, ambition, are all characteristics of someone who possesses the quality of greed. Recognizing that every single human being has at least one more of these traits in at least a minor degree, it could just be assumed that all humans contain some form of greed. This conclusion can be reached because human beings, by nature, encompass some sort of desire or ambition for something or else their motivation to even push through life would be non-existent. Everything from striving toward a higher paying job or just wanting a double quarter pounder at McDonald's is an example of self interest and by deductive reasoning also then an example of greed. In summary, greed, in this sense, is anything one strives for that is not a necessity to preserve their life, but instead a luxury one pursues for their own benefit. Therefore, anyone who has a sort of ambition, desire, or interest because of its gain for themselves is acting within the parameters of greed.

Most people associate greed with the billionaire businessman who pays a lower tax rate than the average American citizen. This notion, though founded in a logical train of thought, is entirely false. The idea that greed is defined by how much one has is ridiculous and ignores the principle that underpins greed, which is the idea of obtaining desires that surpass one's

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basic needs, no matter how small those desires may be. Greed exists in every socioeconomic class, in every country, on every continent. It's the poor single mom saving up for a vacation, it's the middle class suburban family spending a Saturday night at an upscale restaurant, and it is even the college student playing a sport that he loves. Even acts of kindness and charity are an extension of the notion of greed, because the people committing these kind acts are doing so because they want to and it benefits them in an emotional manner. Because greed is not limited to any financial status, or even to money at all, it then becomes applicable to many and almost all people that simply desire something beyond what is necessary to sustain life both emotionally and monetarily. Now there may be some that argue that there exists a person or a group of people who do not live beyond their means, and to some extent that statement is true, but to argue that never at any point in their lives did they experience a desire and act on it that would not be considered a necessity is an unsubstantiated claim at best. For all people have experienced some sort of desire, it is simply human nature for that to occur, making greed, also human nature.

Through the numerous examples of how greed affects all of us no matter who we are, the explanation of what characteristics are enveloped in greed, and showing the societal stereotype of greed and how that isn't truly what greed is. Because greed is inevitable as a result of the characteristics instilled in us at birth, it is vital to know just what it exactly is. When you consider someone greedy in today's society there are negative connotations put around that person, when in all reality that person's greed is merely a byproduct of his natural upbringing as was proved in the previous points,

which you in this scenario also suffer from, making your accusation highly hypocritical. Instead, celebrating this inevitable natural human trait instead of smiting it down would not only eliminate this hypocrisy, but also allow society to understand and get the most out of this newfound understanding of the human condition. By understanding what greed truly is and recognizing that all people, to some extent, are participants in the act of greed, the negative outlook that exists around the term can be eliminated, leaving society to flourish as a result.