

Analysis of competition and happiness by theodore isaac rubin: how competition re...

[Business](#), [Strategy](#)



In “ Competition and Happiness,” Theodore Isaac Rubin argues that competition encourages negative traits in people and leads to unhappiness (426). Rubin explains that because competition focuses on comparing ourselves to others, it inhibits our self-development and creates anxiety. People find that they must respond to competitors instead of doing what is good for them, and this creates an endless cycle of depression and hopelessness. Rubin rejects the idea that competition is natural or inevitable, and he argues that it is actually a primitive concept that has been passed down the generations unnecessarily (426). Therefore, Rubin concludes that a world full of competition is a world where people will not experience very much happiness or be able to find genuine satisfaction in their lives. In my opinion, Rubin is correct when he argues that competition prevents happiness and satisfaction because competition creates never-ending stress and anxiety, because it focuses attention on what others are doing instead of self-development, and because it discourages cooperation.

First, competition leads to stress and anxiety because it is a constant process that is never finished. When people compare themselves to competitors, they will feel worry that they might not perform as well or achieve as much as others. When they have success, their relief will be temporary because the competition will begin again the next day or with new competitors. As Rubin states, competition creates a cycle of unending pressure, leading to paranoia and unhappiness (Rubin 427). I have witnessed this effect of competition in school. I used to compare my grades and test scores with my classmates in chemistry class because I felt that if I got the best grade in the class, then I could feel smarter than others. In particular, if

I took standardized tests, I always wanted to know how my friends and other classmates did on the same test. When I scored higher than my friends and classmates, I felt great about myself, and so I was happy for a while.

However, when one class or standardized test was finished, another one would be scheduled for the future, and so my process of competing with classmates would start all over again. The anxiety that I felt for months at a time was not balanced by the few days of happiness I felt when I got a high test score. Even worse, sometimes my classmates performed better than I did, leading me to feel depressed. My experience at school became a source of constant worry and stress because the competition kept going in a never-ending cycle. As this example shows, when people see the world as a competition, they will never be able to feel that their achievements are permanent. There will always be new competitors to defeat or new goals to reach, creating enduring anxiety. In this kind of situation, the satisfaction of winning will never last, and unhappiness will result. For this reason, Rubin is correct when he concludes that competition leads to unhappiness.

In addition, competition shifts people's attention from their own development to the activities and achievements of others, distorting their priorities. Someone might be able to improve their skills or personal knowledge if they focused on getting better than they were in the past. However, if they only compare themselves to others, they might not care about self-improvement (Rubin 427). For example, when I started to play tennis, I originally wanted to improve myself so I could enjoy the game more. However, as I began playing games against others, my mentality shifted, and

I became more focused on how many matches I won. I practiced hard enough to defeat my opponents, but I did not see any reason to work any harder than what was necessary to win. Instead of focusing on improving myself as much as possible, I just cared about whether I could have a winning record. Over time, my improvement stagnated. This example reveals that focusing too much on competition can actually lead someone to stop developing and improving. Instead of judging ourselves based on whether we are getting better compared to before, we judge ourselves only based on whether we are better than whatever competitors we meet. Our priorities become distorted because we do not actually care if we improve or evolve as long as we are good enough to win. As a result, we might lose the opportunity to learn, develop a skill, or improve in many different ways because we fail to pay attention to how we are developing compared to our past level. Therefore, Rubin is correct to say that competition prevents self-development, which is important for happiness and satisfaction in life.

Finally, competition drives a wedge between people and makes them distrust each other, which prevents cooperation and exchanges of help and support. No one can know everything, but people can learn by sharing experiences with each other. However, if they see others as competitors, they might be reluctant to share information or ask for help. In other words, they might be giving up a chance to make themselves happier by solving problems just because they need help from someone else to find the solution. I have experienced this type of problem. I once took a science class where the class had to divide up into teams. My partner and I struggled to

get one of our experiments started, but the team working next to us was having great success. My partner wanted to ask the other team for advice, but I refused. I felt too embarrassed to ask for help because I felt that it would be an admission that I was not as smart as the other students. Eventually, my partner asked them anyway, and we were able to finally understand what we were doing wrong. It turned out that we had put the machine we were using on the wrong settings. My refusal to ask for help almost caused us to fail to finish our experiment. I was worried about how I would look, but I should have been open to accepting advice from someone who knew more than I did. As this example shows, competition makes people feel defensive about accepting help and too proud to collaborate with others. However, no one can know everything, and by exchanging ideas and working cooperatively, people can learn a lot and become more knowledgeable and skilled. By making people too paranoid to seek out support from others, competition takes away this important opportunity for self-improvement and learning. In addition, the failure to cooperate could mean that many problems will not be solved, causing life to be worse for everyone. This will result in greater unhappiness in general. As a result, Rubin's argument that competition creates unhappiness because it discourages people from accepting the nourishment of support is correct.

In the essay, "Competition and Happiness," Theodore Isaac Rubin argues that an overemphasis on competition leads to dissatisfaction in life and an inability to find happiness. According to Rubin, competition is unnatural and takes away people's desire to evolve and grow to become better people,

replacing this desire with jealousy and stress. Rubin's argument is right because competition changes the way that people think about the world. They will tend to respond to external pressure from competitors, reacting to challenges beyond their control, instead of paying attention to what they actually need internally to be happy. They will become less trusting and open to people, rejecting opportunities to learn out of a distorted sense of pride. Finally, they will find themselves on a constant treadmill of competition after competition, never able to rest even after a victory. All of these things will lead to stress and an inability to enjoy life. Therefore, the emphasis on competition in today's society is harmful.