

Dealing with unpleasant situations philosophy essay



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In life we always get our ups and downs. Everyone gets through these life experiences differently according to his character and the way things are approached. Both pleasant experiences and even those less pleasing ones will have an impact on life. Social, financial, psychological and emotional aspects affect the way problems are dealt with. Moreover, handling an unpleasant situation largely depends on character and support given by family and friends. A bad experience in a person's life causes mental stress which may result in making fast decisions reflecting their bad consequences later on.

In my life education is very fundamental. I used to achieve high satisfactory grades during my secondary education. As a quite promising student, I used to aim high, aiming of someday becoming a Doctor. Enrolling to a matriculation course soon showed me that that was not an easy task to achieve and a lot of perseverance, much more than I used to have, was necessary. My subjects were not the easiest of all and lack of commitment started to have bad academic results. My far-fetched aims demolished and this led me to give much more importance to work and earn some money. I did not manage to attain the requirements to enrol in a University course

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and reasoned out to give another chance to myself and spend another year studying the failed subjects. Having changed school was already a drawback. To complicate things even worse, I was stolen and attacked by five persons on my way to work the day after Christmas of last year. Having my face bruised and retina commotion I was a bit afraid of going out alone and became paranoid that someone could be watching me. This experience in my life influenced me a lot, especially mentally where I always felt the need of having revenge, however I was persuaded that justice will do its job. For sure the New Year was not one of the best but with the help of my family and my girlfriend I was trying to get over this awful experience and start a new chapter. Going back to school was very hard for me and questioning by people suppressed me from attending regularly.

In order to start looking at the optimistic side of life, I gave way to my dream of getting the driving licence and buying my own car with my brother helping me financial wise. Following a rough time I was finally going to achieve something which in my mind was going to give me my dignity back. Pursuing a materialistic dream was far too easily achievable opposing the academic one which I repeatedly was unsuccessful in. However, this time academic failure did not struck me that much since my car on its own made me feel successful in some other way. In order to completely own my ' success', I had to pay the debt incurred and felt the need of working more.

I was working for something I already was enjoying, therefore this made me to fall more in love with my car, to the extent that I decided not to take exam re-sits in order to be able to work enough to pay it off through the summer. I used to enjoy each and every of my rides and I will always remember those
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great experiences I went through with it. As the end of summer was approaching and I was accepted for this course I started to admit the fact that the course on which I was going to embark too did not meet my previous expectations and desires. However, each time this thought stroke my mind, I used to console myself by my car which justified everything.

Then the worse that could ever happen, just before school commencement, on the 2nd October, I had a car accident on my way to work where my car was almost totalled due to a careless driver who steered on me while I was overtaking him, pushing me off the road into a gate. In a split of a second I was in despair, losing the most important thing at that moment which gave me some sort of status. I lost courage, motivation and will-power up to the extent where I was not going to register in the course any longer.

Nevertheless, at the beginning I started to attend to every lesson but I had so much hassle going on regarding the accident and trouble with the insurance agencies that I could not concentrate. In addition, lack of perseverance together with the fact that the course was not all that interesting at the beginning especially for a student who has an A level background, I missed on some lectures. Time healed my sorrowful feelings and I plucked up some courage with the help of my personal lawyer who is currently pursuing my case and struggling for a refund from the insurance company of the money lost in the accident. With reassurance of having some percent of right, I could now rest my thoughts and integrate back into the school attitude until here I am today writing this reflective diary analyzing improvements in my character arising from the experiences lived.

In the psychological world, hiding from reality and escaping the harsh truths of life is most commonly known as 'negation'. Killing your future due to the present or even worse due to the past is not a solution. I have learned that one has to find those people who you can count on and support you during hard times while keep holding on the future.

Forgiveness

Looking back at the experiences I went through last year, I learnt fundamental values that are important in life in order to keep looking at the bright side of life.

Following the incident where I was beaten up, I have nowadays learnt to forgive; a psychological meaning of forgiveness is the refusal to hurt back the one who hurt you. My unfortunate event led to slight post traumatic stress disorders as I started to consider myself as a victim in every situation. My mind could not set at rest due to having recurrent memories of the event, recurrent nightmares and flashbacks in which I re-lived the distressing experience. I had feeling of extreme guilt and vengeance, withdrew from friends and lost interest in activities I enjoyed and education. At the end of the day, the Court of Justice left me without my mobile phone and a bruised face with no compensation, therefore I felt that no justice had been made with my case. From this happening onwards, my point of view to the local justice has degraded significantly. However, with the help of my family I realised that holding on to bitterness and anger towards those who hurt me, including justice itself, could only make things worse and seeking revenge only depletes strength and prevent emotional 'wounds' from healing. One has to grasp back to his normal life and adopt for any unplanned changes.

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Therefore, trying to annihilate the traumatic memories and reaching an end for the past, I returned to my habitual, perpetual dreamer way of life.

Ambition and Materialism

Ambition and materialism form a considerable feature of my character.

Ambition is closely related to motivation. It relates to many things such as desire to: attain success in life, achieve personal or professional advancement, achieve fame, power, money, social status, position, or achieve the fruits of an activity. In 1943, Abraham Maslow presented the theory of 'Hierarchy of Needs' distinguishing between physiological, safety, social and esteem needs. In Maslow's theory ambition could be included under esteem needs as a desire for increased self-esteem and achievement. Others define ambition as an earnest desire for some type of achievement or distinction and the willingness to strive for its attainment.

Materialism is the attitude that physical well-being and worldly belongings constitute the utmost good and highest value in life. A materialistic person is therefore a person who is markedly more concerned with worldly concerns such as money and possessions rather than spiritual, intellectual or cultural values.

My materialistic characteristics mainly depend on financial success and social recognition. As a car enthusiast, my ambition to have a sporty car which made me believe to stand out from the crowd fulfilled my materialistic desire which at the same time made me feel better and forget the previous negative experience. However, we can sometimes believe that pursuing material possessions will gain us status and admiration while also improving

our social relationships. This was in fact my mistake since I did not consider my car only as a means of transport but also my passion which revolved all my life around it. My priorities were messed up as I started to loose off from other things such as education while gave more importance on work in order to fully own my ' success'. The status the car gave me neutralised between the sense of superiority attained and inferiority arising from my failures. The car was my comfort and became very sentimental as I dedicated a lot of importance towards it.

Van Boven has spent a decade studying the social costs and benefits of pursuing happiness through the acquisition of life experiences such as traveling and going to concerts versus the purchase of material possessions like fancy cars and jewelry.

“ We have found that material possessions don't provide as much enduring happiness as the pursuit of life experiences,” Van Boven said.

The “ take home” message in his most recent study, which appears in this month's edition of the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, is that not only will investing in material possessions make us less happy than investing in life experiences, but that it often makes us less popular among our peers as well.

“ The mistake we can sometimes make is believing that pursuing material possessions will gain us status and admiration while also improving our social relationships,” Van Boven said. “ In fact, it seems to have exactly the opposite effect. This is really problematic because we know that having

quality social relationships is one of the best predictors of happiness, health and well-being.

“ So for many of us we should rethink these decisions that we might make in terms of pursuing material possessions versus life experiences,” he said. “ Trying to have a happier life by the acquisition of material possessions is probably not a very wise decision.”

CU-Boulder marketing Professor Margaret Campbell and Cornell University Professor Thomas Gilovich were co-authors on the study.

Past studies have found that people who are materialistic tend to have lower quality social relationships. They also have fewer and less satisfying friendships.

In the recent study, Van Boven and his colleagues conducted five experiments with undergraduate students and through a national survey. They sought to find out if people had unfavorable stereotypes of materialistic people and to see if these stereotypes led them to like the materialistic people less than those who pursued life experiences.

In one experiment undergraduates who didn't know each other were randomly paired up and assigned to discuss either a material possession or a life experience they had purchased and were happy with. After talking for 15 or 20 minutes they were then asked about their conversation partners by the researchers.

“ What we found was that people who had discussed their material

possessions liked their conversation partner less than those who had
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discussed an experience they had purchased,” Van Boven said. “ They also were less interested in forming a friendship with them, so there’s a real social cost to being associated with material possessions rather than life experiences.”

In another experiment using a national survey, the researchers told people about someone who had purchased a material item such as a new shirt or a life experience like a concert ticket. They then asked them a number of questions about that person. They found that simply learning that someone made a material purchase caused them to like him or her less than learning that someone made an experiential purchase.

“ We have pretty negative stereotypes of people who are materialistic,” Van Boven said. “ When we asked people to think of someone who is materialistic and describe their personality traits, selfish and self-centered come up pretty frequently. However, when we asked people to describe someone who is more experiential in nature, things like altruistic, friendly and outgoing come up much more frequently.”

So what do you do if you’re somebody who really likes to buy lots of material possessions?

“ The short answer is you should try to change,” Van Boven said. “ Not just our research, but a lot of other research has found that people who are materialistic incur many mental health costs and social costs — they’re less happy and more prone to depression.”

Van Boven says one thing you can do is choose to be around people who are less interested in material goods.

“ It’s not a quick fix, but it can be done,” he said. “ I think what makes it particularly challenging is that it requires some extra effort and mindfulness about the way we make decisions about how to be happy in life.”

Stress Management