

PD10 - Interpretations of PD 10 Discussion

Post by "Elayne" of January 19, 2021 at 2:54 PM

[Don](#) my understanding of the engineered goal of social media sites is that it isn't intended to cause pleasure but to create addiction. Which has been called wanting without liking. They are pretty good at creating that response. There are very brief rewards from getting likes to one's posts and comments, but the main experience seems to be unfulfilled desire generation. Our nervous systems are vulnerable to being exploited that way.

Sometimes people can feel pleasure at having biases confirmed, but much of the politically biased content is angry/paranoid in tone. It's possible for people to get hooked on the excitement of anger with really getting much pleasure from it.

If people were really getting reliable pleasure from social media use, the fact that some or all of the information was false would be relevant if it set the person up for unexpected pain or shortened pleasure/life. If social media were engineered to avoid those pitfalls of painful consequences somehow, then it might work out to be a wise choice. But just as with a pharmaceutical, that would depend on the trustworthiness of the product/designer and whether it was as advertised. I haven't seen a false belief system yet which has lived up to its promises, so I would need overwhelming proof of effectiveness before signing up.

I do make use of small mind tricks-- there is some evidence that seeing beautiful natural scenery is mood enhancing. A hospital window with trees in view, for instance, can improve recovery. Whenever possible I prefer to get the whole experience-- inhale the terpenes from the trees, etc. But even just a photo can trick the brain into some of the same benefits. So if I'm working in a windowless room, I use photos of mountains or beaches to make use of an illusion of being somewhere I am not. Yes, I consciously know I'm not there-- but part of my brain is responding to a ruse.

Apparently placebos might even help when people are told they are getting placebos. I've seen one study on this.

However, when we use ruses, it's wise to watch for unexpected consequences. I read a book on artificial flavoring, the Dorito Effect, summarizing research on how a flavor may signal our brains we are taking in certain nutrients, but if the flavor comes without the nutrients, it throws off our appetat. That's the kind of thing I would investigate for in any technology proposing to deliver pleasure along with some sort of ruse.