

Imagery On The Interplay Between "Pursue Pleasure" and 'Avoid Pain'

Post by "Kalosyni" of March 28, 2023 at 4:53 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But even as we debate this practical angle, the ultimate philosophical point remains and I think we all agree on it -- that in the end life is a balance between pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, but while we sometimes choose pain in order to pursue pleasure, we never set "avoiding pain" as the primary overriding purpose of life.

Yes, I agree with this. And it is all much more complex than this - and in certain situations we really do need to be sensitive to the balance of pain and pleasure that we feel inside our bodies.

I was pondering today, that there is a strange paradox in the pursuit of pleasure -- it is as if nature gives us a reward to reinforce certain behaviors.

For example: When we are hungry there is pain present from the hunger. The stomach growls and there is a slight feeling of stomach acid in the empty stomach prompting us to eat to relieve the discomfort. As we eat, there is enjoyment of the taste and smell of the food to reinforce the behavior of eating. When we get full, there is the sensation of fullness which signals that it is time to stop eating, and depending on the level of fullness can cause varying levels of discomfort. Of course we can eat at times when we are no longer hungry and enjoy the variation of the experience of taste and smell. But eating more than necessary can lead to a sluggish feeling (not to mention weight gain). When food becomes a source of emotional comfort, we are also potentially eating too many calories (and we may be taking the easy way out of a situation instead of doing the harder work of finding ways to get emotional support or activities which relieve the pain of boredom).

If we know how (or learn) to stop eating when we are at the right level of fullness, then that in itself can bring a kind of pleasure, since we will have relieved the hunger and also have good energy (and not feel sluggish).

So what I am saying is that there is a complex mix of pleasure and pain - removing pain and adding pleasure. And there may be other areas in life that have this interplay.