

Why Do We Consider The Absence of Pain To Be Pleasure?

Post by “Julia” of November 8, 2024 at 7:44 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

"I merely need to welcome it" could be read as a kind of muted Stoic-sounding indifference.

That's not what I say. I don't say "I don't care about the presence or absence of pleasure". I say "I welcome its presence," and I mean that in the same way as Don has just explained perfectly the meaning of "to welcome sth": the arrival of pleasure causes joy, it is a thing I am grateful for, but it is also something I don't need to push myself towards – it happens on its own. I don't need to discipline myself to eat more of my favourite foods, I just need to welcome the joy of them and the eating of them, and the pleasure of the eating of them, that happens practically on its own.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

rather than seeing themselves as sort of idly waiting to welcome whatever happens to come along

That's not quite true for me. Unless I make a concrete mental effort to do just about anything, my Self (as opposed to my body) will remain in thought worlds, and my body (as opposed to my Self) will continue to behave as a piglet would (seeking a soft corner with a heated blanket and comfort food). To do anything at all, I need to first bring the two together. Next, I need to muster the mental power to force my body to move against its drive for immediate gratification, because I know there is more pleasure to be had by [delaying gratification](#). This is to say: Even to shower I *need* to call to mind "I do this now, because I will feel better after!" Unless I did that, unless I would *briefly* acknowledge and then account for the pain involved, unless I would embrace it *for the sake of the reward* that's sure to come, and *quickly* moved my mind *firmly* into the mental space of how I will feel after I have showered, I would not be able to do it. I simply couldn't be bothered, even though I would be filthy. And this is not speculation, this is tried and tested, time and again. My mind would dissociate from the body again, wondering off into thought, and my body would move itself to a warm corner and wrap itself up in a warm, soft cocoon.

While these mechanics probably start with much smaller actions in me compared to average people, they remain the same no matter what I do. Others who also have a strong ability to dissociate, such as David Goggins, are similar. He is quite clear about that, in his two books,

and also in subsequent interviews: He hates running, but he loves what he gains from it on a personal, private level so much that he continues to do it, and he does it by not thinking about running, but by firmly holding in mind what he gets in return, as well as by not engaging in arguments with his own mind, because it will only find excuses, weaken his resolve, make him quit, which will then make him miserable. He idly wasted his life away before that, barely scraping by, over-indulging in junkfood and TV - and I'd be no different; as a matter of fact, I've been there.

I suppose this comes down to a difference in nature and nurture, leading to different dispositions, requiring different remedies on the detailed level, the split-second by split-second level of how to operate one's mind and body, despite the overall goal and guide to life being the same.