

Should we Feel Pity for someone Dying Young? 'The Human Predicament' by David Benatar

Post by “Don” of November 5, 2023 at 6:38 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Actually, regardless of whether he's right or wrong to pull back from it, I think it's a point worth discussing. Does (or can) imagining "hypothetical what-might-have-beens" lead to healing?

You raise some interesting points. To add a little more context, I was specifically referring to thinking things like "If only X were alive, they would be graduating from high school and going off to college. X wanted to be a doctor when they were [pick an age when few people really know what they'll do]. I know they would have been a great doctor...etc." That kind of thinking is a rabbit hole of despair. *Maybe* something more healthy would be "X always loved to pretend they were a doctor. I remember them hitting my knee with their little plastic hammer and listening to my heart with the toy stethoscope...etc." Remembering things that actually happened rather than torturing oneself with regrets and prognostications that can never be. If those regrets and prognostications bring pain to the one doing the regretting and making up "little X would be doing ABC IF they were alive...", those things are "bad" by virtue of the pain they bring. If, on the other hand, the living person uses X's possible path to medicine to create a foundation to send other children to medical school and takes pleasure in that endeavor, it could be positive to imagine "what might have been." It all comes round to context.