

Why isn't "satisfaction" the guide of life?

Post by "Julia" of December 15, 2024 at 7:50 PM

This explains nicely why pleasure is *the goal*, but it does not explain why it should also be *the guide* towards that goal...? 🤔

Isn't aiming for satisfaction going to result in the maximum pleasure? What's the difference between hedonic calculus and making sure you're as satisfied as possible in as many areas of life as possible? To help me see the difference, can you give me a counterexample, where my choice of words would be misleading?

I would argue that newborns tend to be more about immediate gratification (little pleasure right now; Cyrenaic), whereas older animals (including humans) shift towards delayed gratification (to maximise pleasure over time according to predicted future; Epicurean), and I would further argue that the sensation of success in that latter process – that is: the sensation accompanying the pleasure derived from successfully executed hedonic calculus – is called satisfaction (or pleasure of reward). Satisfaction is the pleasure of reward, the pleasure of hedonic calculus done well (eg: made a plan, came through, no regrets).

If one specific pleasure is the indicator of how well I compute and follow through with hedonic calculus, then doesn't that specific pleasure become *my guide* (towards maximising the net sum of all pleasure, which is still *my goal*)?

In my own experience: When I initially said "OK, let's maximise pleasure!" that worked well, but it remained very hard to start, let alone complete unpleasant tasks (for more pleasure later). The general pleasure (of all types except satisfaction) I predicted I would gain was insufficient to motivate me (even for unpleasant but ordinary tasks that are sensible, necessary, even urgent); however, focusing specifically on the satisfaction I predicted I would feel after each potential course of action, it became much clearer to me which course of action is correct, and also only then could the predicted general pleasure really unfold and push towards motivating me, too. It's as if predicted satisfaction turns predicted pleasure into present motivation. With that, satisfaction became the guide, did it not?