

Can We Experience Pleasure in One Part of Our Experience and Pain In Another Part of our Experience At the Same Time?

Post by “Godfrey” of January 6, 2020 at 4:35 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

When you are sick Godfrey are you actually completely oblivious to how bad you feel when you read?

Excellent question!

I just tried an experiment: I went outside and stood in the sun and watched my perceptions. I experienced the sensation of the sun's heat and the sensation of my sore throat simultaneously. In terms of the feelings of pleasure or pain, I experienced pleasure from the sun's heat, but only the sensation of the sore throat.

Another experiment: I've got a very stiff neck, which is more painful than my sore throat. I looked at a picture that brings me pleasure, then while continuing to look at the picture I turned my body into a very uncomfortable position for my neck. I still felt pleasure from looking at the picture, while I felt the sensation of a stiff neck. Continuing to move, I felt pain in my neck and just the sensation of the picture, without the pleasure.

Regarding reading, when I'm totally focused on reading I don't notice any pain, but often I'm in kind of a spacey midway point where I'm experiencing neither pleasure or pain.

What this suggests to me is that there's a subtle difference (which I can't put my finger on now in my spacey midway point) between sensations and feelings. Pleasure and pain are a response to sensations (and to anticipations and to thought) and it's possible to experience a sensation without experiencing noticeable pleasure or pain. If sensations are relatively mild, then feelings are only noticeable by the attention that we give to them. This can be misconstrued as a "neutral state".

Unfortunately I'm in a NyQuil haze so I'm not sure if I'm making any sense 😊