
Of all the characteristics of ordinary human nature envy is the most unfortunate; not only does the envious person wish to inflict misfortune and do so whenever he can with impunity, but he is also himself rendered unhappy by envy. Instead of deriving pleasure from what he has, he derives pain from what others have. If he can, he deprives others of their advantages, which to him is as desirable as it would be to secure the same advantages himself. If this passion is allowed to run riot it becomes fatal to all excellence, and even to the most useful exercise of exceptional skill. Why should a medical man go to see his patients in a car when the labourer has to walk to his work? Why should the scientific investigator be allowed to spend his time in a warm room when others have to face the inclemency of the elements? Why should a man who possesses some rare talent of great importance to the world be saved from the drudgery of his own housework? To such questions envy finds no answer. Fortunately, however, there is in human nature a compensating passion, namely that of admiration. Whoever wishes to increase human happiness must wish to increase admiration and to diminish envy.

What cure is there for envy? For the saint there is the cure of selflessness, though even in the case of saints envy of other saints is by no means impossible. But, leaving saints out of account, the only cure for envy in the case of ordinary men and women is happiness, and the difficulty is that envy is itself a terrible obstacle to happiness.

But the envious man may say: 'What is the good of telling me that the cure for envy is happiness? I cannot find happiness while I continue to feel envy, and you tell me that I cannot cease to be envious until I find happiness.' But real life is never so logical as this. Merely to realize the causes of one's own envious feeling is to take a long step towards curing them.

How can Envy be Cured?

Among the most unfortunate features of human nature, one is envy. It causes an envious person to harm other, inspite of the fact that he himself is affected too. Instead of feeling pleasure for his own achievements, he feels sorrow over others gains. Thus, he tries to rob their advantages, which he wishes for himself. Envy becomes a cause of destruction of his own skills and makes him unable to answer the question that why some people get more in life than others.

Envy can only be cured by admiration that increases happiness.

If the envious person is a saint, selflessness is enough for his cure. However, if the envious person is an ordinary human, happiness is the only solution. But, envy itself

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is a hinderance to happiness, thus making it difficult for the person to be happy. However, determining the cause of envy is still an important step towards the treatment.

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The Psychological causes of unhappiness, it is clear, are many and various. But all have something in common. The typical unhappy man is one who having been deprived in youth of some normal satisfaction, has come to value this one kind of satisfaction more than any other, and has, therefore, given to his life a one-sided direction, together with a quite undue emphasis upon the achievement as opposed to the activities connected with it. There is, however, a further development which is very common in the present day. A man may feel so completely thwarted that he seeks no form of satisfaction, but only distraction and oblivion. He then becomes a devotee of "Pleasure". That is to say, he seeks to make life bearable by becoming less alive. Drunkenness, for example, is temporary suicide; the happiness that it brings is merely negative, a momentary cessation of unhappiness. The narcissist and the megalomaniac believe that happiness is possible, though they may adopt mistaken means of achieving it; but the man who seeks intoxication, in whatever form, has given up hope except in oblivion. In his case the first thing to be done is to persuade him that happiness is desirable. Men, who are unhappy, like men who sleep badly, are always proud of the fact. Perhaps their pride is like that of the fox who had lost his tail; if so, the way to cure it is to point out to them how they can grow a new tail. Very few men, I believe, will deliberately choose unhappiness if they see a way of being happy. I do not deny that such men exist, but they are not sufficiently numerous to be important. It is common in our day, as it has been in many other periods of the world's history, to suppose that those among us who are wise have seen through all the enthusiasms of earlier times and have become aware that there is nothing left to live for. The man who hold this view are genuinely unhappy, but they are proud of their unhappiness, which they attribute to the nature of the universe and consider to be the only rational attitude for an enlightened man. Their pride in their unhappiness makes less sophisticated people suspicious of its genuineness; they think that the man who enjoys being miserable is not miserable.

"Reasons/Causes of Unhappiness"

There are several psychological reasons for unhappiness, all having one point common. The unhappy person is the one who has lost some valuable thing in his youth, that causes his dissatisfaction. Also, people feel unhappy when they get distraction instead of satisfaction and thus adopt measures, like drinking, to get temporary freedom from unhappiness. These people have actually lost hopes and require pursuasion of happiness as a cure. They need to be realized that happiness is achievable. There are negligible number of people that who prefer to be unhappy, although they are capable of seeking happiness. These are the

people who have enjoyed
 everything in life and now
 find nothing to get
 pleasure. They are usually
 proud of their condition which
 makes other skeptical of
 the originality of their
 miserability.

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