

#PSYCHOLOGY

For a happy life, don't forget hedonism

The pursuit of hedonic and long-term goals needn't be in conflict with one another.



Enjoying short-term pleasurable activities that don't lead to long-term goals contributes at least as much to a happy life as self-control, according to new research. Based on their findings, the researchers argue for a greater appreciation of hedonism in psychology.

We all set ourselves long-term goals from time to time, whether we want to start getting into shape, eating less sugar, or learning a foreign language. Researchers have devoted a lot of time to finding out how we can reach these goals more effectively.

The prevailing view is that self-control helps us prioritize long-term goals over momentary pleasure and that if you are good at self-control, this will usually result in a happier and more successful life.

"It was always thought that hedonism, as opposed to self-control, was the easier option. But really enjoying one's hedonic choice isn't actually that simple for everybody."

"It's time for a rethink," says Katharina Bernecker, a researcher in Motivational Psychology at the University of Zurich. "Of course, self-control is important, but research on self-regulation should pay just as much attention to hedonism, or short-term pleasure."

That's because Bernecker's new research shows that people's capacity to experience pleasure or enjoyment contributes at least as much to a happy and satisfied life as successful self-control.

Bernecker and her colleague, Daniela Becker of Radboud University, developed a questionnaire to measure respondents' capacity for hedonism, i.e. their ability to focus on their immediate needs and indulge in and enjoy short-term pleasures. They used the questionnaire to find out whether people differ in their capacity to pursue

hedonic goals in a variety of contexts, and whether this ability is related to well-being. They found that certain people get distracted by intrusive thoughts in moments of relaxation or enjoyment by thinking about activities or tasks that they should be doing, instead.

"For example, when lying on the couch, you might keep thinking of the sport you are not doing," says Becker. "Those thoughts about conflicting long-term goals undermine the immediate need to relax."

The pursuit of hedonic and long-term goals needn't be in conflict with one another. On the other hand, people, who can fully enjoy themselves in those situations, tend to have a higher sense of well-being in general, not only in the short term, and are less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety, among other things.

Bernecker says, "Our research shows that both are important and can complement each other in achieving well-being and good health. It is important to find the right balance in everyday life."

Unfortunately, simply sitting on the couch more, eating more good food, and seeing friends more often won't automatically make for more happiness.

With more people working from home, the findings are especially topical, as the environment, where they normally rest, is suddenly associated with work.

"Thinking of the work, that you still need to do, can lead to more distracting thoughts at home, making you less able to rest," says Bernecker.

So, what can you do to enjoy your downtime more? More research is needed, but the researchers suspect that consciously planning and setting limits to periods of enjoyment could help to separate them more clearly from other activities, allowing pleasure to take place more undisturbed.



Dr. Goutam Sen
CTVS Surgeon
Traveller
Storyteller

It is two months since the horrendous rape and murder of a thirty-one-year-old lady doctor took place in Kolkata. It took place in a so-called safe place. The R. G. Kar Medical College and Hospital.

This place is where men and women work together and have been doing so for more than a century. The fact that the doctor was exhausted after a thirty-six hour shift and had no place to rest is the consequence of a dismal state of infrastructure in our Medical Institutions. Further, that she was lured into an upper floor Seminar Room to rest is a matter which needs more investigation. Normally, this would be another nasty crime, and after due investigation as well as capture of the miscreants, strict punishment would be expected. BUT this did not happen!

There was a delay in informing the parents and dubious messages were conveyed. First, she is unwell! Later, a statement that she has committed suicide! A quick post-mortem!!! A still more hasty funeral!!!! The FIR was delayed by fourteen hours. Something was certainly wrong in the affairs of the State of West Bengal.

Lady Macbeth at the helm of affairs was caught on the wrong foot! It was then revealed by the student fraternity that the victim had been

gathering evidence of misdeeds of criminal nature by the staff of R. G. Kar Medical College and Hospital. She was being harassed as a result. She was on the brink of informing the people and media about all this. Was she, therefore, a victim of preplanned murder in an attempt to obliterate the evidence? Only time and the CBI will tell.

A protest by the resident doctors began in an attempt to clear the air and hasten the investigation process. The matters became worse when demolition of the seminar area was done in a hurried manner by the administration. This suggested an attempt to destroy any evidence in that area. It was suggestive of collusion between the police and the college administration.

This agitated the Resident doctors and the protest became more vigorous and voluminous, when residents from other Medical Colleges joined in the protest, too. A sudden attack by miscreants (of unknown origin) on the premises of the R. G. Kar Medical College premises stunned the people of Kolkata. More than thousand rioters had turned up. The police, guarding the crime venue, had equally and suddenly disappeared. The law and order situation came under the lens of the High Court and the case was transferred to the CBI, although the State police claimed that they had already arrested one, Sanjay Roy, a medical volunteer, with access to all parts of the hospital for the crime. This was done on the basis of CBI evidence.

The CBI, on taking over, found many factual errors and tampering with the evidence, probably done by the Kolkata Police in an attempt to shield higher ups in the medical fraternity and the officers



The precondition of live broadcast of the meeting was trimmed down to recording of minutes being agreed upon. Verbal assurances have been made about removal of Commissioner of Police of Kolkata, Vineet Goyal, and several senior police officials, including Deputy Commissioner (North). Abhijit Mondal, Officer In-charge of Tala Police Station, has been arrested for allegedly misleading the investigation and altering the crime scene. Two top officials of the Health Department, Dr. Kaustav Nayak (Director, Medical Education) and Dr. Debashish Haldar (Director, Medical and Health Department) have also been removed. The doctors continue to demand the replacement of the Health Secretary. This remains to be done. The level of mistrust between the two sides remains high. The Government continues to ask for withdrawal of the protest and the doctors to return to work forthwith. On the other side, the doctors say that the decision will only take place when the verbal assurances are given in writing.

Are our Women Doctors Safe?

#LIVE AND LET LIVE



of the Health and Medical Education departments. There was a tinge of political misdeed, meanor, too. Otherwise how was it possible that Dr. Sandip Ghosh, the Principal of R. G. Kar Medical College, was dismissed only to reappear as Principal at Kolkata Medical College within four hours? It is a different matter that the students of that college did not allow him to join.

As the protest gathered more strength amongst the resident doctors of Bengal and other resident doctors of India, the people of Kolkata awakened to the misdeeds of the government and also joined in the public marches and dharnas at various venues. Senior doctors of the Medical College came out in good strength to condemn the government inaction. Dr. Kunal Sarkar, an eminent Cardiac Surgeon, spoke vehemently against the government. All night vigils and candle marches were conducted to draw the attention of the nation. They not only provided vocal support but also brought

provision and food. No political party was allowed to taint the protest. The West Bengal Government, instead of being sympathetic, tried to disrupt the agitated doctors with strong police force using water cannons and *lathi* charge.

The matter was taken up by the Supreme Court suo moto and is still under their supervision. It has met again on 17th September to hear both sides of the case. The CJI has said that it finds the disclosure of the CBI 'really disturbing'. It was not willing to disclose details as it would hamper the ongoing investigation. The SC continues to supervise the investigation and is getting periodic reports but has not been able to enforce a quick negotiation and settlement between the protesting doctors and the West Bengal Government. On the same day, after a prolonged delay and following many futile efforts to connect with the protesting doctors, Mamata Banerjee had a meeting at last. The precondition of live

Origami Day



World Origami Day

Many people aren't aware of the fact that a particularly special day is about to be celebrated. In fact, it's especially important one for all those paper folding fanatics out there, for all of those folks, who look at a flat sheet of paper and dream of all of the exciting objects, that could be made out of it, simply by folding. So, for those who happen to love the art of folding paper and creating beautiful creations from paper, cloth, dollar bills, napkins, or anything that'll hold a crease, *World Origami Day* is for you.



Assurances are given in writing. They will then have to approve the timeframe in which the actions need to be taken.

Public protests have been an integral part of India's democratic landscape, allowing citizens to express grievances and hold authorities accountable. Effectiveness of protests depends on clear goals and demands. Such protests with specific, achievable objectives are more likely to succeed. Widespread participation and support with large and more diverse crowds can exert greater pressure on authorities. When protests remain peaceful and non-violent, they garner public support and attention from authorities. Significant media coverage and public awareness can build further pressure on the government.

On the other hand, when protests get prolonged (although there is no indication of the current Kolkata protest mellowing) with fatigue, dwindling participation and public interest is common. Frustration, escalation and violence can lead to discrediting the protest and undermining its goals. The West Bengal Government had hoped that the protest would become feeble as the state celebrates Durga Puja. This did not happen and seven doctors went on Hunger Strike from 5th October onwards. Several are now showing exhaustion and medical problems following a seven-day period and have been admitted in the hospital. Kalyan Banerjee, a TMC member, commented in a vengeful manner that this is only 'a hunger strike till hospitalization, they were supposed to be on hunger strike till death.' It shows the casual attitude of the TMC and its Government. To add to the force of the strike, most national bod-

ies have come out in support. Yet, no effect has been seen. The demands remain mired in discussion with the government, now being represented by the Chief Secretary, who will, in due course, have to get all points of agreement approved by the Chief Minister. This represents the true tactic of delaying to lessen the effect of the protest!

Assurances made during protests may have short term gains. Authorities may make concessions to appease protesters, but these may not be sustainable or fully implemented. Authorities may renege on promises or delay implementation, leading to renewed protests. Repeated broken assurances can erode trust in authorities and the protest process.

In the current case, regarding the crime and removal of the people who have been amiss in their responsibilities and also tampered with the crime scene, seems to have been heard and acted upon. This is a good short term action. In the long term, silly orders like not posting women doctors on night duty need to be withdrawn. A larger security force, trained in the care of women doctors, also have been appointed but still need to be trained and then seen in action. Finally, the whole system of medical education and hospital care, which seems to be seeped in corruption, requires overhauling. If this is not done, such rapes and murders will be seen in the corridors of our hospitals again and again.

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#CELEBRATIONS

Pushkar Camel Fair

As day turns into night, the fairgrounds light up with traditional dances, concerts, and performances that continue to captivate the audience.

The Pushkar Camel Fair is a colourful event held annually in the desert town of Pushkar, Rajasthan. It is a unique celebration that brings together thousands of visitors, both local and international, to witness a spectacle like no other.

The fair is known for its lively atmosphere, featuring everything from camel races and beauty contests to traditional Rajasthani music and dance performances. Beyond its visual appeal, the fair holds deep cultural significance. It serves as a gathering point for local communities, who come to trade livestock and celebrate their heritage. Competitions such as camel races, turban tying, and even mustache contests draw enthusiastic crowds, highlighting the unique customs of the region.

As day turns into night, the fairgrounds light up with traditional dances, concerts, and performances that continue to captivate the audience. This dynamic blend of cultural exchange and celebration makes the Pushkar Camel Fair a must-visit event, that encapsulates the vibrant spirit of Rajasthan.

Embrace the Camel Craze

Dive into the heart of the Pushkar Camel Fair by witnessing the lively camel races and beauty contests. Admire the beautifully decorated camels, dressed in vibrant fabrics and intricate ornaments, as they showcase their elegance and strength. Watching these majestic creatures compete is a unique experience, that's both thrilling and captivating. For a closer look, join a camel safari and explore the desert landscape surrounding the fair.

Try Your Hand at Turban Tying

Get into the spirit of Rajasthan by participating in a turban-tying competition. It's a chance to learn about this traditional art and test your skills. With a variety of colours and patterns to choose from, you'll be amazed at the creative ways a simple piece of cloth can be transformed. It's a fun, hands-on way to connect with local culture and possibly win some bragging rights.

Dance the Night Away

As the sun sets, the fairgrounds come alive with traditional music and dance performances. Join the locals in a lively *Ghoomar* dance or simply enjoy the spectacle of skilled dancers twirling in colourful costumes. The evening festivities often include concerts featuring local musicians, making it a perfect time to relax and soak in the vibrant atmosphere. Grab a cup of hot *chai* and let the music sweep you away.

Capture the Colors

Photography enthusiasts will find endless inspiration at the fair: From the vibrant attire of visitors and performers to the breathtaking desert sunsets, every corner offers a picturesque scene. Take part in the 'Frame of the Fair' competition, where capturing the essence of the event could earn you a prize. Whether you're a professional or just snapping with your phone, the fair's lively colours and unique moments make it a photographer's paradise.

Savor Local Flavors

Indulge in the delicious array of *Rajasthani* cuisine, available at the food stalls, scattered throughout the fairgrounds. Treat your taste buds to local specialties like *dal baati churma*, *kachori*, and *gatte ki sabzi*. Don't miss the sweets like *malpua* and *rabri*, which are sure to satisfy your sweet tooth. Eating your way through the fair is a delightful way to experience the region's culinary heritage.



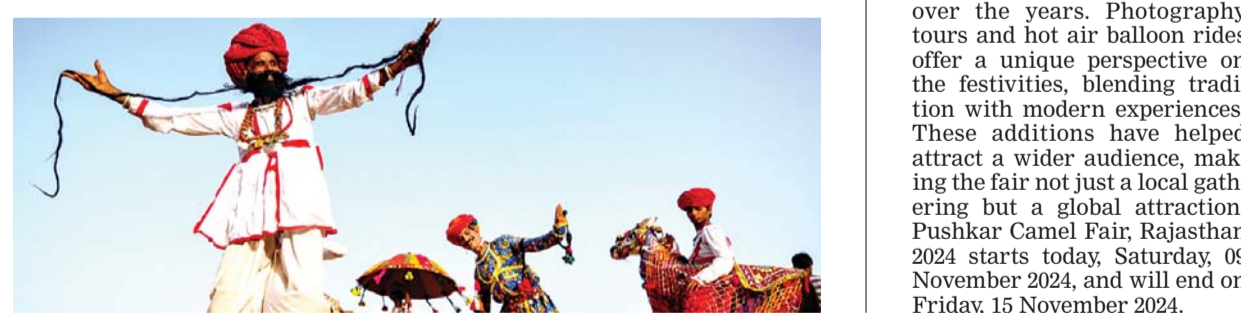
What to do
Visitors can explore a variety of activities, including camel safaris, cultural performances, and local handicraft markets, making it a rich and immersive experience for everyone.



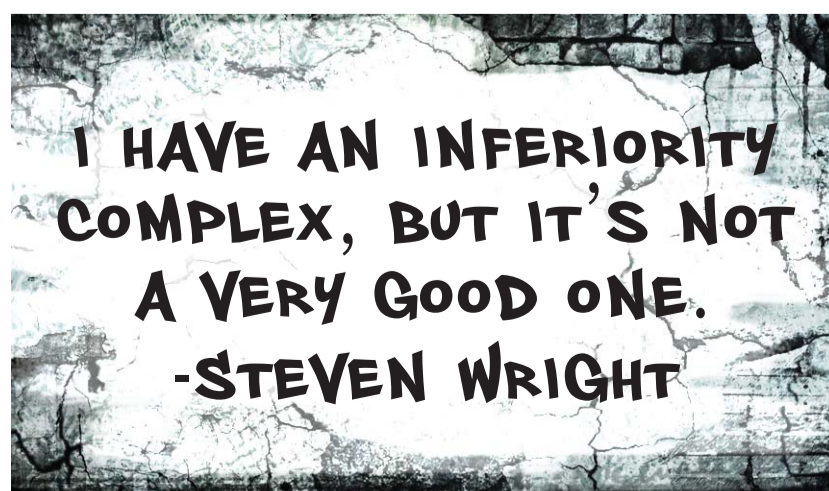
History

The Pushkar Camel Fair, one of the most famous events in Rajasthan, dates back to the 19th century. It began as a place for local *Rajasthani* tribes to trade camels and livestock. Over time, it transformed into a major cultural festival, attracting tourists from around the world. The fair originally served as a trading hub, where farmers and herders gathered to buy and sell camels, which were crucial for farming and transport in the desert region. The fair coincides with the *Hindu* month of *Kartik* and culminates on the full moon day, known as *Kartik Purnima*. This timing gives the fair a dual significance, religious and commercial. Devotees flock to Pushkar Lake to take a holy dip, believing that it purifies their souls. The fair now features not only livestock trading but also cultural performances, camel races, and various competitions.

One of the highlights is the camel race that kicks off the event, where camels, adorned in vibrant ornaments, parade through the fairgrounds. Competitions like 'longest mustache' and 'turban tying' are crowd favorites, showcasing the rich traditions of the region. These events foster a sense of community among participants and provide visitors with a glimpse into local customs. The fair has also embraced modern elements over the years. Photography tours and hot air balloon rides offer a unique perspective on the festivities, blending tradition with modern experiences. These additions have helped attract a wider audience, making the fair not just a local gathering but a global attraction. Pushkar Camel Fair, Rajasthan 2024 starts today, Saturday, 09 November 2024, and will end on Friday, 15 November 2024.



THE WALL

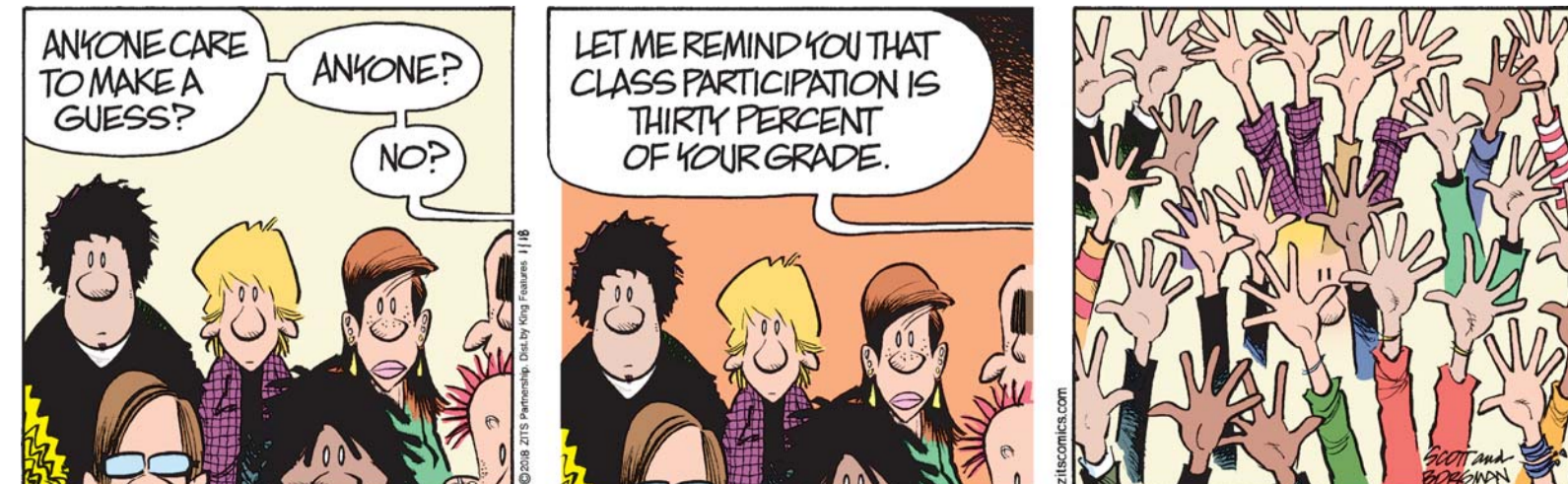


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

