

Conclusion of the Replacing Guilt series

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Today marks the end of my series on replacing guilt ([table of contents](#)).

I [began the series](#) by discussing the "restless guilt," that people feel when some part of them thinks they aren't doing what's important. I argued that it's possible to [care about things outside yourself](#), and things [larger than yourself](#), no matter what a nihilist tells you.

In the second arc of the series I implored readers to [drop their obligations](#) and ask themselves where they would put their efforts if there was nothing they felt they "should" be doing. If you can drop your sense of obligation and still [care hard](#) for something larger than yourself, you are well on your way to dispensing with guilt-based motivation.

In the third arc, I described techniques for building and maintaining a powerful intrinsic drive without the need to spur yourself with guilt. I point out that [working yourself ragged is not a virtue](#), and that the "work too hard then rest a long time" narrative is a [dangerous narrative](#). We can't always act as we wish we could: We're [not yet gods](#), and it's often easier to change our behavior by [exploring obstacles with experimentation and creativity](#) instead of attempting

to berate and guilt ourselves into submission. I plea for self compassion and argue that there are no "bad people".

In the fourth arc, I describe ways to draw on the fact that the world around you is broken as fuel for your intrinsic drive. If, when given the choice between "bad" and "worse" you can choose "bad" without suffering; if you can be content in your gambles while having no excuses and coming to terms with the fact that you may fail, then it becomes easy to transmute your guilt into resolve and struggle hard to make the future as bright as you can make it.

In the fifth and final arc, I describe mindsets and mental stances from which guilt seems an alien concept. Primary among them are "confidence all the way up", the skill of believing in your capabilities while not being overly sure of anything; and desperate recklessness defiance, the three dubious virtues of those with strong intrinsic drive.

I conclude with a few words on how we will be measured: When all is said and done, Nature will not judge us by our actions; we will be measured only by what *actually happens*. Our goal, in the end, is to ensure that the timeless history of our universe is one that is filled with whatever it is we're fighting for. For me, at least, this is the underlying driver that takes the place of guilt: Once we have learned our lessons from the past, there is no reason to wrack ourselves with guilt. All we need to do, in any given moment, is look upon the actions available to us, consider, and take whichever one seems most likely to lead to a future full of light.

