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SUBCONSCIOUS BEHAVIORS that are KEEPING YOU from HAVING THE LIFE YOU WANT

Every generation has a “monoculture” of sorts, a governing pattern or system of beliefs that people unconsciously accept as “truth.” It’s easy to identify the monoculture of Germany in the 1930s or America in 1776. It’s clear what people at those times, in those places, accepted to be “good” and “true” even when in reality, that was certainly not always the case.

The objectivity required to see the effects of present monoculture is very difficult to develop. Once you have so deeply accepted an idea as “truth” it doesn’t register as “cultural” or “subjective” anymore. So much of our inner turmoil is the result of conducting a life we don’t inherently desire, only because we have accepted an inner narrative of “normal” and “ideal” without ever realizing.

The fundamentals of any given monoculture tend to surround what we should be living for (nation, religion, self, etc.) and there are a number of ways in which our current system has us shooting ourselves in the feet as we try to step forward. Here, 8 of the most pervasive.

01. You believe that creating your best life is a matter of deciding what you want and then going after it, but in reality, you are psychologically incapable of being able to predict what will make you happy. Your brain can only perceive what it’s known, so when you choose what you want for the future, you’re actually just recreating a solution or an ideal of the past. When things don’t work out the way you want them to, you think you’ve failed only because you didn’t re-create something you perceived as desirable. In reality, you likely created something better, but foreign, and your brain misinterpreted it as “bad” because of that. (Moral of the story: Living in the moment isn’t a lofty ideal reserved for the Zen and enlightened; it’s the only way to live a life that isn’t infiltrated with illusions. It’s the only thing your brain can actually comprehend.)

02. You extrapolate the present moment because you believe that success is somewhere you “arrive,” so you are constantly trying to take a snapshot of your life and see if you can be happy yet. You convince yourself that any given moment is representative of your life as a whole. Because we’re wired to believe that success is somewhere we get to—when goals are accomplished and things are completed—we’re constantly measuring our present moments by how “finished”

they are, how good the story sounds, how someone else would judge the elevator speech. We find ourselves thinking: “Is this all there is?” because we forget that everything is transitory, and no one single instance can summarize the whole. There is nowhere to “arrive” to. The only thing you’re rushing toward is death. Accomplishing goals is not success. How much you expand in the process is.

03. You assume that when it comes to following your “gut instincts,” happiness is “good” and fear and pain are “bad.” When you consider doing something that you truly love and are invested in, you are going to feel an influx of fear and pain, mostly because it will involve being vulnerable. Bad feelings should not always be interpreted as deterrents. They are also indicators that you are doing something frightening and worthwhile. Not wanting to do something would make you feel indifferent about it. Fear = interest.

04. You needlessly create problems and crises in your life because you’re afraid of actually living it. The pattern of unnecessarily creating crises in your life is actually an avoidance technique. It distracts you from actually having to be vulnerable or held accountable for whatever it is you’re afraid of. You’re never upset for the reason you think you are: At the core of your desire to create a problem is simply the fear of being who you are and living the life you want.

05. You think that to change your beliefs, you have to adopt a new line of thinking, rather than seek experiences that make that thinking self-evident. A belief is what you know to be true because experience has made it evident to you. If you want to change your life, change your beliefs. If you want to change your beliefs, go out and have experiences that make them real to you. Not the opposite way around.

06. You think “problems” are roadblocks to achieving what you want, when in reality they are pathways. Marcus Aurelius sums this up well: “The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way.” Simply, running into a “problem” forces you to take action to resolve it. That action will inevitably lead you to think differently, behave differently, and choose differently. The “problem” becomes a catalyst for you to actualize the life you always wanted. It pushes you from your comfort zone, that’s all.

07. You think your past defines you, and worse, you think that it is an unchangeable reality, when really, your perception of it changes as you do. Because experience is always multi-dimensional, there are a variety of memories, experiences, feelings, “gists” you can choose to recall...and what you choose is indicative of your present state of mind. So many people get caught up in allowing the past to define them or haunt them simply because they have not evolved to the place of seeing how the past did not prevent them from achieving the life they want, it facilitated it. This doesn’t mean to disregard or gloss over painful or traumatic events, but simply to be able to recall them with acceptance and to be able to place them in the storyline of your personal evolution.

08. You try to change other people, situations, and things (or you just complain/get upset about them) when anger = self-recognition. Most negative emotional reactions are you identifying a disassociated aspect of yourself.

Your “shadow selves” are the parts of you that at some point you were conditioned to believe were “not okay,” so you suppressed them and have done everything in your power not to acknowledge them. You don’t actually dislike these parts of yourself, though. So when you see somebody else displaying one of these traits, it’s infuriating, not because you inherently dislike it, but because you have to fight your desire to fully integrate it into your whole consciousness. The things you love about others are the things you love about yourself. The things you hate about others are the things you cannot see in yourself.