

AI-00811 Empty Feeling After Success

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What is the term called of an empty feeling after achieving a milestone?

The term you're looking for is the **arrival fallacy**.

This describes the feeling of emptiness or letdown that can happen after achieving a major goal. It's a common experience, especially for ambitious people who focus heavily on the destination rather than the journey.

Diving Deep into the Arrival Fallacy

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The arrival fallacy is a mental trap that tricks us into believing happiness lies solely in achieving a goal. It explains the unexpected emptiness or disappointment some experience after reaching a long-desired milestone. Here's a closer look at the mental processes behind it:

1. Overvaluing the Destination:

Our brains tend to focus intensely on goals, picturing a future state of happiness upon reaching them. This future state becomes idealized, ignoring the ongoing process of life. We imagine achieving the goal will solve all our problems and bring lasting fulfillment.

2. Neglecting the Journey:

The arrival fallacy makes us neglect the present moment and the experiences along the path to our goal. The journey itself, with its challenges, learning, and small wins, holds immense value. But by solely focusing on the end result, we miss out on these opportunities for growth and happiness.

3. Hedonic Adaptation:

Our brains adapt to new situations quickly. Once we achieve a goal, the initial happiness might be intense, but it tends to fade over time. This is called hedonic adaptation. We then set a new, even bigger goal, perpetuating the arrival fallacy cycle.

4. Unrealistic Expectations:

The arrival fallacy often stems from unrealistic expectations about how achieving a goal will change our lives. We might overestimate the positive impact and underestimate the challenges that might still exist. This disappointment fuels feelings of emptiness.

5. Identity Crisis:

Sometimes, our goals become so central to our identity that achieving them leaves us feeling lost. We might not know what to work towards next, leading to a sense of purpose void.

Overcoming the Arrival Fallacy:

- **Focus on the Process:** Enjoy the journey, celebrate small wins, and appreciate the effort and growth involved.
- **Set Realistic Goals:** Set achievable and specific goals that bring fulfillment along the way.
- **Practice Gratitude:** Be grateful for what you already have, not just what you're chasing.
- **Redefine Success:** Success isn't just reaching a destination, but also continuous growth and learning.
- **Find Intrinsic Motivation:** Connect your goals to your values and a sense of purpose beyond external rewards.

By understanding the arrival fallacy and its mental processes, we can avoid falling into its trap. Remember, happiness is a journey, not just a destination.

Synthesize the "arrival fallacy" into living well in the 2nd half of life. List 20 examples of the synthesis.

Arrival Fallacy Antidote: Embracing the Journey in the Second Half of Life

The arrival fallacy can be particularly disruptive in the second half of life, as we may re-evaluate accomplishments and goals. Here's how to use this concept to live well:

Shifting Focus:

Instead of waiting for some future point of ultimate happiness (retirement, financial security, etc.), we can reframe our thinking to embrace the ongoing process of living.

20 Examples of Embracing the Journey in the Second Half:

1. **Learning:** Take up a new skill or language, explore a neglected interest.
2. **Contribution:** Volunteer your experience and knowledge to make a difference.
3. **Relationships:** Deepen connections with loved ones, mend old bridges.
4. **Travel:** Experience new cultures and broaden your perspective.
5. **Wellness:** Focus on healthy habits and preventative care.
6. **Creative Expression:** Explore painting, writing, music, or any artistic outlet.
7. **Personal Growth:** Challenge yourself intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.
8. **Gratitude Practice:** Savor the good things in your life, big and small.
9. **Letting Go:** Release attachment to past regrets or missed opportunities.
10. **Mindfulness:** Practice being present in the moment, appreciating everyday experiences.
11. **Adventure:** Embrace spontaneity, try new things, step outside your comfort zone.
12. **Forgiveness:** Forgive yourself and others, release negativity.
13. **Legacy Building:** Define what matters most and create your own legacy.
14. **Simple Pleasures:** Find joy in everyday moments - nature walks, reading, hobbies.

15. **Giving Back:** Mentor younger generations, share your wisdom and experience.
16. **Living Authentically:** Embrace your true self and live life on your own terms.
17. **Physical Activity:** Find ways to move your body that you enjoy, stay active.
18. **Financial Security:** Focus on financial planning for peace of mind, but don't make it the only goal.
19. **Community:** Connect with others who share your interests, build new friendships.
20. **Acceptance:** Embrace the aging process and the changes it brings.

Remember: The second half of life is an opportunity for continuous growth, contribution, and fulfillment. By focusing on the journey and appreciating the present moment, we can avoid the arrival fallacy trap and live a well-lived and meaningful life.