**Psychology of Revenge**

***Abstract:***

In this term paper, we discuss the psychology of revenge. We commence our paper with the definition of revenge, what is it actually and what is its prevalence in today’s world. We then talk about what actually happens in our mind and body before, during and after we take a revenge. We, then examine if it actually feels better when we take revenge or if it makes it worse. We answer the question to if it is justifiable to take revenge and what are all the costs associated when taking revenge. We finally conclude with a quick overview of revenge as a tool in today’s world and if it is good to use this tool or not to in catharsis.

***1. Introduction:***

***1.1. What is Revenge?***

According to the Oxford Dictionary, Revenge is "the action of hurting or harming someone in return for an injury or wrong suffered at their hands". It defines revenge both as an act and a desire. An act of harming the other person and a desire to see the other person suffer.

***1.2 Why is this issue important in today's world?***

The struggle with revenge is centuries old. Shakespeare said, "If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?". According to a new study published in The Journal Of American Psychology, a large proportion of human beings devote nearly all of their lives thinking about and planning for revenge. The same study showed that even in moments when people are thought to be focused on something else like eating or working, a large proportion of their consciousness is working on how to get back on their ex-spouse or turn an entire Fortune 500 company from inside. And almost all, as the study further shows, view themselves as the agents of justice believing what they did were perfectly rational. No matter how much we hate revenge, it is a feeling which comes to every human being some time or the other.

***2. Main Theme***

***2.1 The Science behind the Revenge***

The feeling of being wronged and wish to punish the person who did wrong to us is something which is wired within us. A group of Swiss Researchers did an experiment with a group of people who they did wrong in a game in the lab. They then scanned the brains of them and found a rush of neural activity in the caudate nucleus which is the part of the brain known to process rewards when they were contemplating their revenge. In other words, that study found that revenge at the moment is quite rewarding.

***2.2 Does it actually make you feel better?***

So even though the initial moments feel rewarding and we see revenge as a form of catharsis, psychological scientists have found that instead of satisfying, revenge instead prolongs the unpleasantness of the original offence. Instead of giving you a feeling of justice, revenge starts a cycle of retaliation among the group which would otherwise have healed if forgiven. A study headed by Kevin Carlsmith with a group of students showed that the students who took revenge were reported to feel worse even though they told that they would have felt even worse if they hadn't got their revenge and the group which didn't get the chance to take their revenge told they felt worse about the case that they didn't get their change even though they were the happier group. (Carlsmith, K. M., Wilson, T. D., & Gilbert, D. T, 2008)

***2.3 Cost of Revenge***

It is likely that the revenge might motivate counter revenge and prolonged feuds rather than induce corporation (Kim & Smith, 1993). A study showed the perspective of the revenge seeker and the transgressors'. The revenge seekers rated the revenge as equitable while the transgressors rated it as excessive (Stillwell, Baumeister, & Del Priore, 2008). This gap which is generated from the perspective results in an escalating cycle of revenge. Each group later on in an attempt to "get even" keep on taking revenge which sometimes may start to severe and cause deadly wounds. The motivation for revenge may lead to negative health outcomes. Research on the physiological correlates of revenge and forgiveness revealed that state and trait forgiveness were associated with lower levels of blood pressure and lower heart rate, whereas revenge cognitions and desire to avoid one’s transgressor were associated with increased cardiovascular reactivity (Lawler et al., 2005). Moreover, high forgiveness and low revenge resulted in reduced stress leading to fewer sickness symptoms.

***2.4 Healthy Revenge Case Stories***

Ferruccio Lamborghini, after having problems with the clutch in his Ferrari 250 GT, went to Enzo Ferrari, who answered his complaints with "the problem is not with the car but with the driver!" and went on to advise him to look after his tractors instead. Instead of seeking any physical revenge, he worked on his own goals and then the world saw the famous Lamborghini Super Cars that surpassed Ferrari.

Steve Jobs recruited John Sculley to run Apple. In 1985, Sculley managed to convince the board of directors to fire Jobs from Apple. Instead of seeking any vengeance, Jobs built another company called NeXT, which was later acquired by Apple and Jobs again gained control of the company.

***3. Conclusion***

As it is obvious and it feels good that’s why we tend more towards revenge. But revenge doesn’t actually make us feel how we expect. But the fact that revenge makes us feel good for a while is also true. So we can say that it is a mixed bag of temporary satisfaction for a trade-off of a long-term dwelling. So the arc of revenge bends toward dissatisfaction and agreed that revenge becomes necessary in some cases, but rather than responding to injustice by rushing out to the transgressors, think about the relative costs and loss it can result will always be a better option.

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