

## Unlocking your Inner Drive

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People, as driven beings, find themselves motivated in two distinct directions: we tend to move towards things we want, and away from things we don't want. This is a jolly good idea, especially for things happening in the outside world. However, can we use it for the world inside us?

Being clever, we extend the same principle, to categorize challenging feelings like anxiety, sadness, and uncertainty as things to move away from, and positive emotions such as happiness, excitement, and relief as things to move towards. This concept appears intuitively sound, but applying it to the internal world causes all sorts of problems.

Reflect on a personal achievement you're genuinely proud of, such as completing a marathon or passing an important exam. Now, think back to the initial stages or moments when you were actively working towards this accomplishment. What were your thoughts and feelings then? Notice how the pursuit of something of great value typically triggers negative thoughts and uncomfortable emotions in the short term. So, our mind tells us to move away, like how one might react upon encountering a bear or an approaching bus. Then, if we do move away, the first emotion that shows up is relief.

We develop a habit of moving away from bad or difficult thoughts and feelings and moving towards good ones. But this is a trap because it can mean we move away from what matters most in life.

So, what do we do about this? To overcome this urge to move away from difficult internal experiences, we must first understand what we really want from life – what are the things we truly value? What is most meaningful and important for us? It could be things like being a loving family member, being responsible at work, being honest and virtuous. Then, we need to build the willingness to experience these difficult internal experiences in order to keep moving towards our values. We can't experience love without the fear of rejection, achieve greatness without grappling with the fear of failure, or changing our lives for the better without worrying that we may change for the worse.

There is no way around this; it is the human condition. However, we can construct a life that centres around moving towards our values and goals rather than perpetually avoiding the undesirable. We can build and master the ability to experience difficult thoughts and feelings in serve of what matters most to us. While this journey may be challenging, it ultimately empowers us to engage in the pursuits that hold the utmost significance in our lives, thus effecting meaningful change.