

Introduction to Cognition Deficiency Myopia Disorder

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Introduction

The question “What do you want to be when you grow up?” and the statement “Follow your passion” are some of the most common examples that are usually directed toward young individuals during career-related discussions.¹ The conundrum presented by these utterances, in spite of their ethical intentions, is evident in that the responses oftentimes come in the form of bewilderment. Based upon personal experience and independent research, I have found that they are among the many causes that contribute toward the entrapment of individuals due to the way it confines their way of thinking, both spatially and temporally. There appears to be no official definition for this condition, although some popular online sources describe it as a form of mental² or psychological³ myopia, given that myopia is loosely defined as “a condition in which someone cannot clearly see things that are far away”.⁴ I have identified the need for a term to describe this condition in a clearer and more logical manner. From here on, the term Cognition Deficiency Myopia Disorder (CDMD) shall be used to describe “the condition where a human being suffers from a lack of spatial and temporal awareness, which causes her or him to think and behave in ways that negatively affect her or his happiness and health, as well as contributing toward the reduction in chances of survival of the human species on a grand time scale.” More specifically, the segment “Cognition Deficiency” refers to a lack of understanding that everything in nature has a cause. Everything is connected, either directly or indirectly and this foundational principle applies to humans as well. Thus, humans that lack knowledge of the connection between themselves and the environment will have a tendency to display it through their behavioral patterns. The segment “Myopia Disorder” refers to the patterns of thinking and behaving that lead a human toward not being as happy and as healthful as they could be due to their lack of understanding about how they affect, and are affected by the environment. It also describes the inability to accurately foresee the short-term and long-term consequences of their actions. When extending this on a grand time scale, it may also negatively contribute toward their own

survival, as well as that of their species. Hence, the myopia is caused by the cognitive deficiency and the latter is reinforced to some extent by the former. Having established a basic definition and description of CDMD, the above-mentioned examples are to be investigated throughout the entirety of this article because they serve as a useful demonstration of how the condition comes into existence and what it entails. When the implications for the economy and society are accounted for as well, one begins to realize that such utterances are not only inadequate, but also potentially destructive. With that being said, I shall explain briefly, what can be done to counter this trend and why everyone can and should, acquire meaning in their lives.

Research and Analysis

What is it that every human being desires to experience in life? The answer is happiness. Because it is a concept that is so complex, it is difficult to measure it with scientific accuracy. This is why the study of happiness remains for the most part, a philosophical inquiry. An individual's happiness is constantly fluctuating and at various intensities, depending on a number of factors that would be too many to list here, at least for practical purposes. The point of mentioning this is that having meaning in life is but one of the many things a human needs in order to be happy. When it comes to choosing careers and finding meaning in life, this subject has proven to be problematic, due to its complexity. A number of scientific studies that have been carried out to improve peoples' understanding of the subject have found that there are two general theories that explain the ways in which young people pursue their interests.⁵ The "fixed" theory is used to describe how individuals are motivated by the discovery of an occupation that interests them to the extent where pursuing it is relatively effortless. This stands in contrast to the pursuit of an occupation that does not interest them as much. Hence, individuals are fixed to pursuing a singular occupation because of the belief that their interests are intrinsic, rather than developed through experience. On the other hand, the

“growth” theory explains that interests are developed through experience and that individuals are not motivated by any particular occupation. Here is what is significant about these theories; when relating to the former, individuals are more likely to become demotivated when not pursuing an occupation they believe to be of their interest. When relating to the latter, individuals are more likely to develop interests in multiple occupations, which indicates that they are more adaptable and therefore, less likely to become demotivated when forced to change occupations. The hierarchy of needs, which was developed by Abraham Maslow, although not entirely accurate, is nonetheless helpful in putting this into perspective. Finding meaning in life is closely associated with self-actualization and self-transcendence.⁶ In the past, only a small number of individuals were able to satisfy those needs. However, with the rise of the internet, people are now almost instantly connected to the vast number of communities that exist across the world. The people have become global citizens due to their having realized that they share a common purpose – to take care of the planet not just for themselves, but also for the future generations. As such, transcendence involves collective action, whereby citizens from across the world are compelled by their profound experiences to combat problems that affect society, such as poverty and war. Thus, a career need not always involve the pursuit of financial gain, as some people occupy their time by helping others improve the quality of their lives. When linking this to what has been written about the “fixed” and “growth” theories of motivation, I have found that a certain association can be made. For example, individuals that have a “growth” mindset are more likely than those that have a “fixed” mindset to be able to achieve self-actualization and self-transcendence. This is because they are more capable of seeing themselves for who they are, and the world around them for what it is. This indicates that their way of thinking is less confined than that of their counterparts as they are not as influenced by preconceived notions of what it means to live a meaningful life. When bringing this into the context of this article, it becomes apparent as to how encouraging individuals to think narrowly and selfishly about pursuing a career that they may enjoy, can be detrimental to their happiness in the long-term,

especially for those who are young. This is because the youth are generally too inexperienced in life to be able to know what occupation might interest them. It can also be detrimental to the proper functioning of society as there is little to no consideration taken for the kind of knowledge and skills that are required for serving the needs of society. There are at least two things to deduce from this. First, the public-at-large does not adequately understand human behavior and semantics. Second, the public-at-large does not adequately understand the interconnectedness between themselves and the environment in which they live, both natural and artificial, with the latter referring to that which is made by humans.

As has already been established, every human desires to be happy. Therefore, asking someone what he or she wishes to be in the future is redundant. The statement “Follow your passion” which frequently passes for advice is also redundant, with the addition of being meaningless, as it does not convey any practical information to the listener. This is indicative that the way in which people communicate is ambiguous. The plight witnessed here is semantically problematic because as explained in a book called *Language in Thought and Action* there is a difference between information that is intentional and information that is extensional.⁷ The intentional meaning of a word or phrase is that which is suggested inside of an individual’s head, with the utterances mentioned in the introduction as an example. The extensional meaning of a phrase on the other hand, involves the description of what something is. If the reader desires a cunning example, then they may consider the previous sentence as one. As can be observed, the issue is that the language used is so abstract that it does not provide the listeners with a detailed guide for becoming valuable members of the workforce and neither does it confer any extensional information for obtaining passion. What must change is the way in which meaning is derived from the language. Instead of asking a young person “What do you want to be in the future?”, a better question to ask would be “What do you think are some of the greatest problems that the world must

address and how would you go about solving them?”. This question is more thoughtful because it does not encourage the listener to follow any particular career path based upon a standardized conception of what constitutes a career. It is also more likely to stimulate critical reflection than the former, as it is more specific. The odds are that it might even stump the listener, considering that the question is so broadly encompassing that it does not have only one correct answer. Should the listener respond something akin to “I have no idea”, which is the most likely form of response, then it may be suggested that they conduct some research into the industries that are imperative to the proper functioning of society and that may be lacking skilled workers. For example, a labor market report that has studied the economies of twenty countries across the world has revealed that by the year 2030 there will be a shortage of over 85 million skilled workers, which would account for a potential loss of approximately \$8.5 trillion.⁸ The finance, business, technology, media, telecommunications and manufacturing industries are those that are most at risk of being in a labor force deficit. According to the report, this issue exists mainly because the job vacancies are not being occupied at the right place and at the right time. This is one example of the type of information that would be useful for guiding young individuals toward a life of meaning, not just because of the occupation in and of itself, but also because of the role the individual plays in helping society function optimally. When reverting to the statement “Follow your passion”, which as has already been explained is both redundant and meaningless, it is also potentially inimical to an individual’s happiness, as well as to the proper functioning of the economy and society. When people utter the phrase what they are really trying to say is something akin to “Do as you please”. This is probably the nearest equivalent that I can think of. Perhaps the reader might be able to find an equivalent that is more suitable. Let me be clear, I acknowledge that when people utter this statement, they do so in the form of advice and to help bring out the best in their fellow humans. However, the end-result stays the same more or less; the listeners may not know how to respond to such a statement. The other scenario is that they are aware of what it is like to be passionate about a certain occupation,

even though their feelings may be misguided. What I am partly referring to here is the “fixed” theory, as has been defined in the previous paragraph. Something else that I am referring to is that the individuals are not occupying enough of their time on solving the problems that plague society. This is something that I shall expand upon in the next paragraph.

The method by which people communicate is both ambiguous and misleading. In addition to this, it causes individuals to acquire a limited worldview, whereby they are unable to see the broader consequences of not only their own way of thinking, but that of their own actions too. By extension, this increases their likelihood of not only being unable to find meaning in life, but also of not serving society as well as they could have. This leads them to pursuing a conventional career. Traditionally what this means, is that they become specialists in a narrow domain. What happens is that they are not able to perceive the interconnectedness between the various disciplines within the spectrum of scientific knowledge. The following quote extracted from a classic, but little-known book helps to elaborate on the detriments of specialist approaches:

There is a good possibility that a specialist could make wrong observations about phenomena if he is not well informed about other specialties. No matter how well he understood building trends, an architect could not tell us about the look of future cities if he knew nothing about the technology of transportation. And even if he knew where the design of buildings was heading, and all about the transportation system of tomorrow, he would make a wrong guess if he weren't aware of the power of electronics to alter our culture's behavior, if he weren't aware of how tomorrow's inevitable full-scale three-dimensional color video-communication systems will drastically reduce our need to travel.⁹

Thus, had these architects been educated to use a generalist approach, which involves designing cities, rather than a specialist approach, which involves designing individual houses, the problems related to inefficient, and unsustainable

urbanization could have been avoided. As explained by Ross King, a professor of architecture and urban planning, most architects throughout history have had the tendency to project their own values and beliefs into the work they did.¹⁰ The focus has always been mainly related to aesthetics, rather than using the latest scientific knowledge and technology available for designing organized cities that cater toward human needs and that are ecologically sustainable. This issue does not only apply to architects. For instance, it also applies within the fields of astronomy and cosmology, where scientists are by metaphor looking through their telescopes into outer space and wondering about the existence of intelligent life, all the while, they could have been doing the same thing but in the opposite direction. In other words, the issue is related to prioritization. The now-deceased Stephen Hawking is probably the most famous modern example of a scientist who did not seem to recognize what his priorities should have been, which becomes obvious when one examines the research he has published.¹¹ Let there be no mistake. I am not suggesting that all scientists working in the above-mentioned domains are misguided. Neither am I suggesting that those who are misguided should be denigrated for their efforts. Far from it. Rather, what I am trying to explain is that this kind of research is not nearly as important as ensuring that the Earth remains a hospitable planet for all living organisms in the long-term future. With that being said, can it be imagined if all people were advised to find their passion, without thinking about what it means and what it might result in? The consequences of this kind of thinking would result in a population that is incapable of seeing the effect(s) of its own behavior on itself and the impact this would have on the natural and artificial environments, bearing in mind that these variables are interconnected. Therefore, what is needed is a population that is equipped with the skills that would enable it to find out the reasons as to why there is human suffering and to design a solution that will eliminate the cause of the problems. The process of solving a problem in this context is interdisciplinary¹² due to how the solution involves asking “What do I need to know in order to solve this problem?”. What this means is that bits of information must be gathered from across the entire scientific

spectrum in order to find a solution that is not only technically feasible, but that also alleviates human suffering. Anything less than a systematic, interdisciplinary approach will not suffice, as it will only be treating symptoms, rather than causes. Therefore, before one even decides to become a specialist, it is imperative that they study themselves to identify how they perceive themselves and the world around them. Once they have done this, they will have come to understand that they are a part of the world that they are observing, that they are not separate from it. By consequence, they will have come to the realization that the acquisition of meaning is a phenomenon that is ethical because it feels pleasurable. It is also logical because it allows them to understand the nature of reality and subsequently, to behave in accordance with it.¹³

Conclusion

When I first began working on this article, my intention was to show as to how living meaningfully is inextricably linked to the integrity of the economy and society. Although I have only referred to the two examples mentioned in the introduction for illustrating this, I chose them because I have found them to be the most appropriate, given the context of the subject matter. As I have demonstrated, all humans desire to live a life of meaning, but the reason why they struggle to embody this vital characteristic is because of their way of thinking. It does not consider what it is that motivates people. It also does not consider what the priorities should be, with regards to what is necessary to sustain society both at present and in the future. The result is that CDMD is perpetuated by the proceeding generations of humans as they become entrapped by their thought processes. Therefore, they struggle to find meaning in life and are unable to tackle the most serious problems that affect society. There is no singular object or subject to blame for this. Everybody is a victim of their own ignorance. The sooner they recognize this, the better. When all of the world's people come to a mutual understanding that living a meaningful life is just as necessary a component as

working for the betterment of all people, only then will the world's problems be addressed appropriately. This brings me to my final point. Would it not be preferable to be curious and passionate about nature and all that entails, rather than focusing on one miniscule aspect of it?

References

¹ These relate to career opportunities. For a definition and explanation of what a career is, the following link may be helpful:

<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/career.html>.

² Gornto, R. Scott. 2015. "Do You Suffer From Mental Myopia?". *Psychology Today*.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-stories-we-tell-ourselves/201508/do-you-suffer-mental-myopia>.

³ "Psychological Myopia: The Tendency To Think Short-Sightedly". 2013. *Reflectd*.
<http://reflectd.co/2013/07/12/psychological-myopia/>.

⁴ "Myopia". 2019. *Cambridge Dictionary*.

⁵ O'Keefe, Paul A., Carol S. Dweck, and Gregory M. Walton. 2018. "Implicit Theories Of Interest: Finding Your Passion Or Developing It?". *Psychological Science* 29 (10): 1653-1664.

⁶ Venter, Henry, and Elaine Venter. 2010. "Globalization And The Psychology Of The New World Citizen: How The New Global Citizen Compares To Maslow's Level Of Self Transcendence". *The International Journal Of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences: Annual Review* 5 (7): 29-36.

⁷ Hayakawa, S. I., and Alan R. Hayakawa. 1992. *Language in Thought and Action*. 5th ed. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

⁸ Korn Ferry. 2018. "The Global Talent Crunch". Future Of Work.

⁹ Catran, Jack. 1980. *Is There Intelligent Life On Earth?*. Sherman Oaks: Lidoraven Books, 67.

¹⁰ King, Ross. 1996. *Emancipating Space*. London: Guilford Press.

¹¹“Publications”. 2019. *Stephen Hawking*.
<http://www.hawking.org.uk/publications.html>.

¹² Parker, Kelly A. 2015. "Interdisciplinary Research And Problem Solving: A Guide For Students".
https://www.academia.edu/14982806/Interdisciplinary_Research_and_Problem_Solving_A_Guide_for_Students.

¹³ Wilber, Ken. 1996. *A Brief History of Everything*. Shambhala.
