

Solving The Highly-Complex, Debilitating & Ailment-Inflicting Issue Of Inculcated Materialism For Healthier, Happier & Rewarding Lives

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Steve Obregon (AS)

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Michael Luchies (AS, BS)

&

Dr. Sophie Sohyun Bae (BS, JD)

&

Dr. HermanSjr. (AA, BA, BMsc, MA, MMsc, MpsyD)



Photography: Markus Spiske

Who typically has a more fulfilled life? One who amasses as many material things as s/he desires and fulfills all materialistic desires? Or, one who helps people in as many ways as possible so to fulfill as many other lives as possible? Based on the trove of psychological, economic, sociological and theological research, and the sizable amount of personal and cultural anecdotes, it seems safe to say most across this world would say the latter.



Photography: Wikimedia Commons

In fact, the classic “The Divine Comedy” by Dante Alighieri speaks of economic materialists’ damnation as he explores the nine circles of Hell. It is the sixth circle of Hell that awaits those who spend their life on the principles of materialism. There live those who consciously subscribe to philosophical materialism (i.e. those who put their faith in only the material, only what they can see and feel in the present moment). There also live those who subconsciously subscribe to the same but by consciously subscribing to economic materialism (i.e. those who live for the material, for what they can purchase and hold onto via selfish desires). The latter

group lives here because their economic materialism was ultimately based on philosophical materialism. The etymology of it being, “philosophy that nothing exists except matter (from French matérialisme)”. This belief that only the material exists leads to a life-mission that one must cling to material things, a defilement to a creator.

Even from the secular side the short- and long-term damage of materialism to one’s personal and social well-being is understood via research from various scientific fields. This research shows the more people live materialistic lives the more they experience negative emotions, health and life satisfaction. Whereas the more people live altruistic values the more they experience positive emotions, health and life satisfaction.



Photography: Scott Warman

As this is another work in the international collaborative holistic article series on solving highly-complex world issues via holism (i.e. via the collective visions and mindsets of experts and laypeople across countries, industries and languages), which is what I term “Holistic Vision” and teach to entities across countries, industries and languages, let us compare these concepts with other, seemingly unrelated, concepts. This practice is mandatory for seeing everything holistically as it forces one to see and think across landscapes. This then forces the ability to see and create scenarios that most can never even begin to fathom.

Conducting this comparison, we see that a life of connecting with other entities, of creating beneficial connections, is inline with other positive concepts, e.g.:

- The principle behind Metaphysics (not philosophical metaphysics)
- The principle behind the System of Interconnectivity

- Almost all religious and spiritual teachings
- Third level of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Social/Belonging) where humans have an innate desire to connect with/belong to others for grander feelings of happiness
- Magnetism
- Entities sub/consciously participating in the placebo effect
- One of the basis of the continuity of altricial species via the creation of cuteness to babies so non-babies tend to babies

In contrast, a life of disconnecting from other entities, of disconnecting beneficial connections, is inline with negative concepts, e.g.:

- The military practice PSYOP (Psychological Operations)
- Entities sub/consciously participating in the nocebo effect
- Bullying
- Manipulation
- The practice of emotional drain onto others, a.k.a. psychic vampirism
- Abuse (Mental, Physical, Sexual)
- Addiction (regarding disconnecting from positive variables of one's life so to connect with negative variables [the vices] in life)
- The military strategy "divide et impera" (Latin) which, in this case, divides people from the collective so their desires and efforts are directed to selfishly care for themselves and acquire things for themselves so they are hoodwinked from doing good for and unifying with each other



Photography: Martin Adams

While dangers of materialism seem obvious, most allow that lifestyle to exist and perpetuate via media and habit. This permission ensures this physically-, emotionally- and psychologically-damaging practice passes into future generations.

So why do so many across this world hold so dearly to materialism, to things? Why do so many get attached to things and to the acquiring of things to such a detrimental level? Why such lifelong addiction to such meaningless relationships with things? Why is this addiction even protected by inflicting violence and death onto others? And why do so many divorce themselves of their addiction upon realizing their mortality, e.g. when they are near death? Why does death many times reveal the pettiness of materialism to those people? Why do so many then rethink their relations with things and become more giving?



Photography: Pinterest

This is because before the critical mass of an event (e.g. a milestone like death, a final exam, or losing a job), a species will most likely adopt behavioral change (e.g. eating healthy and exercising to avoid death, studying to pass a final exam after delaying study, or polishing one's business image/mindset/processes to keep his/her job). This concept is discussed in the movie "The Day The Earth Stood Still". Below is that dialogue between Keanu Reeves (the human-form alien messenger Klaatu) and John Cleese (the Nobel Prize-winning physicist Professor Karl Barnhardt).

- Professor Barnhardt: There must be alternatives. You must have some technology that could solve our problem.
- Klaatu: Your problem is not technology. The problem is you. You lack the will to change.
- Professor Barnhardt: Then help us change.
- Klaatu: I cannot change your nature. You treat the world as you treat each other.
- Professor Barnhardt: But every civilization reaches a crisis point eventually.
- Klaatu: Most of them don't make it.
- Professor Barnhardt: Yours did. How?
- Klaatu: Our sun was dying. We had to evolve in order to survive.
- Professor Barnhardt: So it was only when your world was threatened with destruction that you became what you are now.
- Klaatu: Yes.
- Professor Barnhardt: Well that's where we are. You say we're on the brink of destruction and you're right. But it's only on the brink that people find the will to change. Only at the precipice do we evolve...

This typical behavioral change before the critical mass of an event is mostly predictable. It allows us to know what most likely will occur with an entity before that milestone.

This foreknowledge of behavior and futility of materialism should force people to examine their materialistic lives, including the damage and missed opportunities of such a detrimental lifestyle.



Photography: Evangeline Shaw

This topic starred in a long, detailed conversation on using holism to conduct a proper and complete meta-analysis of materialism and the accompanying inculcated and mostly subconscious assigning of tremendous value to things. The conversation was with myself and Dr. Sophie Sohyun Bae, a lawyer and tax expert who says her ability to deduce and connect the dots of things and see a larger picture stems from her education in Philosophy. Below is her mindset in this regard.

Things can't create relations because relations are human-assigned. This process is so ingrained in this modern society that people do not really think about the relationships they assign to things, and to people. The bigger issue is with the relationships they assign to things.

Humans are assigning the value of those relationships based not on their own decisions but on outside influences subconsciously telling them how much value to assign to those relationships. But people should ask themselves is that relationship, or at least the value of that relationship, with that thing really what you want or are you just acting based on influences by outside entities telling you what to assign, what to value, what to feel?

People should also ask themselves why they are assigning value to those things before they do it. People do this assignment of great value blindly without looking into

the validity of those influence-pushing entities and claims.

In recent years, how a certain thing becomes our desire has somewhat mutated. External influence always has been a powerful source. Yet in present times, the mechanics of external influence — advertisement — is remarkably sophisticated and prevalent. It breathes an undertone in every aspect of our lives and we don't even know that it is an external influence. To wit, we believe that a desire is our own desire when an advertisement tells us that we desire the thing that is advertised.

In keeping hope alive for a non-materialistic world, the minimalism creed seems as ubiquitous as the Starbucks stores these days. I welcome this development as evidence that it became material (pun intended) enough to be an object of debate. My observation of minimalism is that it largely revolves around discarding a number of things (a.k.a. decluttering) and/or an ostensive stand against materialism. And I dare say that we may be missing a mark.



Photography: Maria Julia Martinez

As understood via study of any change, first a pause must be conducted to change. This pause allows one to divorce him/herself from and conduct a meta-analysis of the current scenario so s/he can properly observe all the variables affecting the scenario. Else, s/he will continue to be blind from any need for change.

As understood via Dr. Sophie's words, people must ask themselves why they are about to do something, in this case subconsciously assign a value to something.

While this knowledge for a meta-analysis is hard to see by anyone addicted, one variable helping usher in this change is the shift of some businesses toward providing social-change missions. Speaking on this point is Michael

Luchies, a storytelling consultant to many entities, an entrepreneur, former university lecturer, TEDx speaker, former YAHOO! contributor, Under30CEO Interview Editor, Entrepreneur author, podcast host, and writer who has authored 1000+ articles.

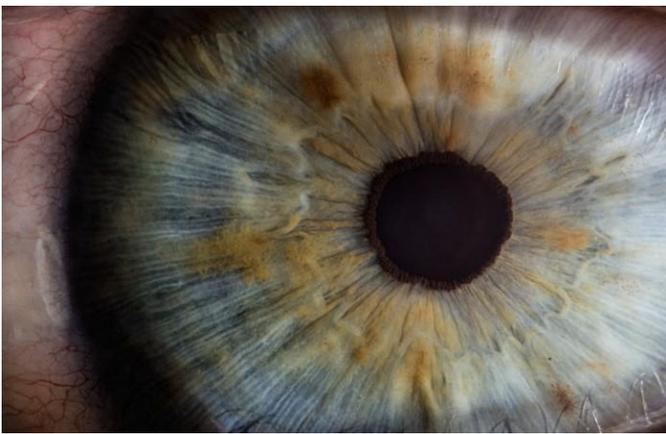


Photography: Jean-Philippe Delberghe

The younger generation of entrepreneurs have been pushing the "social venture" movement for years. Millennials and Generation Z didn't need a pandemic to turn business ideas into mutually beneficial organizations that help people while earning a profit.

During this difficult time, consumers are asking the businesses that have been separating them from their money for decades, "What can you do for me?" The businesses that are answering that question with honest help are benefiting, and others will likely follow suit or face consequences. While no business should have to be forced into making a positive difference on the world, the shift is coming, and businesses should take this time to proactively make that move — invest in employees and have their backs when times get tough and provide sustainable products and services that truly benefit their target market.

Take a hint from young entrepreneurs you corporate dinosaurs — you can make money AND help people. What a concept!



Photography: v2osk

In keeping with the concept of holism, it is imperative to adopt as many vantage points and mindsets as possible. This is regardless of whether one agrees with or believes those viewpoints. The importance is on viewing aspects previously invisible so think and see differently.

Continuing this practice we look to the thoughts of former U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer and Seabee, former law enforcement officer, former firefighter, and current health and wellness entrepreneur Steve Obregon.

Materialism sticks out in my mind as being Generation X. I have seen the effects of it on the Baby Boomer Generation and the rejection of it by Millennials and Generation Z. I have also seen how The Great Depression Generation (my grandparents) had a balance on things, as my generation does.

The Baby Boomer Generation was and is about consumerism and materialism, as seen by the statistics of home, auto and other luxury ownership. Whereas Millennials, and to a lesser extent Gen Z people, have rejected that and are more inclined to rent and not own cars or any substantial luxury items. My generation (X) is in the middle of that as we as a whole own homes, cars and some luxury items and still maintain that balance, versus going overboard on things.

Gen X is, in my opinion, the hinge between the generations as you see both Boomers and Millennials blame each other for all the problems that arise from that gap (e.g. how they think in regards to spending and ownership). Whereas Gen X is in the middle watching and trying to keep a balance as have our parents who are Boomers, and younger siblings, relatives and friends who are Millennials.

My observation of both generations has led me to believe that Millennials are self-centered and put themselves before anyone else in all aspects. Boomers are more of the mindset to help in times of need. Gen X is of the mindset of "I'll help but how will you make sure this does not happen again?"

I have also seen these creeds in how the generations use their income. Big retailers who were once the top of the consumer food chain have closed and departed due to the shift Millennials brought to consumerism and their rejection of materialism. With that, I had to shift how I do business to make sure that I do not follow brands such as Sears, Kmart, Carson's and the others who have been relegated to the dustbin of history.

It will be up to my generation to help shift how materialism and consumerism are viewed and used so there are not two extremes fighting each other. Such a battle would not lead to an outcome of any good or use.



Photography: Mario Purisic

Eclectic ideas, mentalities and perspectives across countries and industries, irrespective of whether one agrees with them or not, must be sought to create game-changing solutions. This practice is the core behind team creation. This is why the greatest problem-solving endeavors are never assigned to a single person. Teams allow differing perspectives, and, thus, abilities. This point is further addressed in my first book (Seeking TRUTH While Sifting Through A Global Practice) via the analysis of everyday symbology. It is the supplemental book of the Holistic Vision program that revamps thinking foundations.

Even if the ideas, mentalities and perspectives clash with each other, they must be sought. This clashing is what helps push people out of their psychological comfort zones. It is what forces people to constantly divorce

themselves from their own visions and mindsets to accomplish new feats.

This collective knowledge helps people habitually analyze their materialism and value-assignment; which leads to early change instead of change only when a negative milestone approaches. Ideally, it will soon lead many to acquire Holistic Vision so to adopt a lifestyle biologically, emotionally, psychologically and ecologically beneficial — to Earth and all its inhabitants (human and non).



Photography: Adrien Olichon