The World is f***ed

By Matthias Yokotsuka

I know. The title is inappropriate. And that's intentional. Why do you ask? You should be experiencing it right now. I got your attention. Your attention is worth a lot in this world full of advertisement, shiny new products and hype, because the more time you spend focusing on something, the more you get influenced by it. That's value right there. And that's good, to an extent. Who wouldn't like to be influenced by nice people, wise books and good advice? But the problem is that many people aren't nice but egoistic, and most YouTube videos are a plain waste of time (my personal opinion). And when you lose control about who influences you how and why, you lose yourself, your identity and your freedom. The things that make you unique from others.

Most people are in that lost state right now, because with the growth of the internet, people can influence far more other people, and you can get addicted or lost in the infinite flow of information and stimuli. You can argue that you don't actually lose your identity, but you instead create a new one, which constantly happens throughout life. The problem is: that new identity can be manipulated by others, who don't act on your behalf and just pursue their own egoistic goals. But the internet controlled by your free independent will makes for a powerful tool to use. So, use it like you want to, but inform yourself about the potential risks and or benefits, to **be aware of the actions you take** (which I will cover in depth later).

The same principle is valid for most things in life which involve any sort of consumption. Food for instance. Most people don't really care much about their food. When I ask people about it, I get that „It's just food bro, it should taste good"-vibe which just drives me crazy. If you think about it, you are made of the stuff you eat. Your body depends on your stupid brain actually delivering healthy stuff into your stomach. Food has a big impact on mental health and your overall well-being. So... why don 't people eat healthier stuff?! Well... because fast food tastes great. And something that our brain perceives as being good for our body, therefore rewarding it with happiness hormones, can't be wrong, can it?

It very well may be. In the past, sugar and other energy intensive calories meant that you could survive longer. You worked hard to get it, like hunting and killing a bison or searching for berries. Of course, your brain rewards you for that. But going to the fridge and unpacking those sugar bombs called donuts isn't really that much work, is it. Additionally, your body doesn't use that energy while you lie on your couch, so it stores it. Or worse: Flooding your immune system with too much unnecessary energy can cause a variety of diseases, diabetes being the prime example. With diabetes, your body actually tries to protect itself against the sugar and fat, so it creates an immunity against it (heavily simplified explanation). How terribly dumb can our own body be sometimes. So it seems. But your decision to eat unhealthy stuff was the reason your body had to do those things in the first place. Don't force your own body to destroy itself. Easy principle. **Keep your consumption controlled.**

I'm definitely not saying you should quit unhealthy stuff entirely, you probably can't anyway. Sometimes eating a big creamy chocolate cake, for example at your birthday, which is indeed really satisfying, should even be a human right. Or rewarding yourself with your favorite food after heavy exercise. ***Keep a balance between your work and the following reward, make exceptions sometimes***. Following that, you never have to deal with unhealthy addictions again.

There is a problem with the things I address in this text, especially the things I'll mention later. They're hard to do and require at least some willpower to execute. Most people struggle with that. Without motivation you will find some silly argument to not improve your life, and you will just live on like you always did. Lack of motivation kills your diet or your will faster than anything else. Motivation is what drives us forward. Motivation lets you seek new ways of keeping it there as long as possible, strengthening your willpower and therefore the control you have over yourself, but can also be destructive when applied to being motivated eating shit, so be careful there.

For most people, the entry into that healthy motivation cycle is the most difficult. Try to start building good habits through seemingly boring activities, like exercising daily, cooking or creating art. Whatever will improve your mental and physical skills, preferably both at the same time. I'm sure you'll find something that you always wanted to do (again) but having it just pushed back again and again, then forgetting about it because of „time reasons". Beware that you may have to sacrifice the time you would normally spend just watching Netflix. What a horrible thought. But it'll pay itself out. I promise. And then, it's not a sacrifice anymore. Try to incorporate these things into your routine, because once started, a routine cannot be given up that easily.

To break bad habits, try to build physical and mental barriers. For instance, if you are addicted to social media, try to move that specific app icon to a different location on your home screen. You will be surprised about how often you miss trying to open that app, and that short period of time you think about where the app icon is again, is enough to make you conscious. You will notice how you will automatically be drawn to that spot where the app previously used to be in the first place. That hints to the fact that it is indeed an addiction, and your body already trained itself to automatically move your finger to that exact spot, which is pretty scary to think about. Of course, completely deleting it will yield far better results, and is the go-to option if you want to break any sort of bad habit. Keep yourself busy being productive, and you won't fall back to addictive Social Media feeds when you are bored. (But do incorporate rest periods, you don't want any sort of burnout happening.)

Now, with that out of the way, it's the perfect time to enter a subject that is pretty easy to digest for most people. Drugs. Seems obvious, right? Don't consume heroine. Okay, we can move on now. Wait… what about all the other drugs that exist? Now it's getting complicated. Drugs can be defined in many ways; I define them as back doors of your biology. (It's important to mention here that most of the "drugs" I will refer to are symbolic drugs.) It doesn't necessarily need to have a negative impact on your body, it just has to artificially move it into a state that it isn't supposed to be. Most drugs in that sense make you high; they motivate you. Now, we're diving deeper into the territory of mental health.

Motivating you doesn't really sound that bad, right? I agree. Getting motivation through drugs and therefore enjoying the world more is great. For people with mental illness, it can even be labeled as "essential". But remember what I just said? They move you into a state you are not supposed to be in. A side effect of drugs of all kinds is that you get dependent and develop an addiction. If consuming drugs makes you feel motivated, you would never want to stop consuming them. That's the greed in yourself working really hard to stay in that nice cozy state. And if you finally decide to stop, you will feel so demotivated, lazy and just plain bad that you start again. If you actually succeeded to get off that drug for a week or two, you will feel nice and motivated again, but that's only temporary. Because of that, a lot of people are in that constant wave pattern, consuming drugs, getting high, stop consuming drugs, temporarily getting low, then high, then low again and then consuming again. It puts extreme pressure onto your personality, because your mood changes all the time, which makes you unreliable.

 You would conclude that staying on that drug and being high all the time would then be a solution, but it obviously isn't. You will always seek something better than what you are or have. That's natural and can be called greed or perfectionism. So, you will consume more and more of the drug, eventually dying of an overdose or that high feeling completely occupying your identity, your emotions, your actions; essentially your whole life. That's a sad life to live. So don't get dependent on drugs.

Here it's worth noting that there are good and bad drugs. Examples for good drugs would be music, your hobbies (if you have any) or sex. They don't really drag you into financial problems or affect your and others health negatively (sometimes even improving it), but can still make you high and therefore be addictive, which, as said before, can really mess with you, ending in destructive overconsumption (I experienced that myself when I listened to music one whole day almost non-stop, it's horrible). Bad drugs would be conventional things that people associate with "drugs" like alcohol, smoking, gambling, video games, and any other known "hard drugs" like heroin. They make you feel good too, but oftentimes create financial problems and affect your mood and health dramatically and negatively, sometimes even ending in death. My advice here is what I have already told you in the beginning. **Control drugs, don't be controlled by them.** Following that, let's get to the next topic.

Minimalism. You probably heard that term before. I hope you did. Let's start with the fun stuff first. The benefits. Minimalism makes you financially more stable, removes the clutter in your head and around you, is good for the environment, is ethically more acceptable and makes you more efficient. If done correctly, like all the other things addressed in this text. Minimalism can be defined as having only the necessary things. There are various degrees to how you define "necessary", but for true minimalists, their belongings should fit into a few travel bags or suit cases. You could take them anywhere if you wanted. That means you can actually buy decent quality stuff from scratch and don't have to pay over and over again to replace it. Additionally, you can hold and maintain things over longer periods of time, as they are important (= necessary), and because you have less stuff overall, it's easier to track and manage. I think this concept is pretty straightforward, so let's move on.

You are more than half way into this text. Do you feel tired yet? That may heavily be influenced by other factors, but I see so many people going to school, barely keeping themselves from sleeping in classes. How much do you sleep? It's a pretty personal question, so you don't have to tell me the answer, but

ask yourself if you actually sleep enough. Most people don't. Sleep is one of the most important factors for good mental health, and yet many don't seem to care and instead prefer long gaming or chat sessions until midnight or later. You know what to do. *Sleep more.* Your only good excuse would be actual time constraints which you can't avoid.

Let me tell you, awareness is a scary thing. Why do I say that? Most people only want to know the shiny side of things, and don't want their guilt to disrupt their perfect world. They theoretically are against science and against finding out the truth. If someone simply didn't know he had done something bad, who can really blame him? It's a genius strategy. Until it's not, and they just isolate themselves from their environment. They know that knowledge is a curse and a blessing at the same time.

Knowing too much is dangerous. But *only with knowledge we can improve ourselves and others*. Here the internet is the bad guy again, creating bubbles in which people with the same opinions come together and enforce each other's opinions, no matter if that opinion is true, ethically acceptable or just. This frees the stage for conspiracy theories, bent and manipulated views of this world, and many other things. People want to be right; everyone wants to be right. *But facing your mistakes is the right way to go, even if it hurts.* I have an example for that.

The younger generation (our/my generation) blames the older generation for having caused climate change, yet most don't really do anything to combat it. It may be true that the CO_2 already released can't easily be taken back, but if this generation is too stupid to learn from history, they'll make the same mistakes and our children will suffer. Just saying. Raising awareness about you and others accidentally shortening the lifespan of the human species on this planet is important for a big chunk of reasons, most of them painfully obvious.

Sad thing is, most don't know that the next one or two decades will decide if humans remain to have a place on this planet without being cooked in a planet sized oven or not. And it's not looking that great right now. So next time you try to save shower water "for the planet", be informed that a regular hamburger takes roughly 2600 liters of water to make, and a regular cotton shirt around 2700 as well. I'm sure you can see which one could have the bigger impact on the water scarcity that is going on without you noticing right now. To sum up this section, a hamburger is probably one of the best tasting foods humanity has to offer, but *it isn't good for you or the world if you think long term.*

A good thing to know here is the true meaning of sustainability. Sustainability is the principle of living off the interest which is generated by a given capital. In this scenario, our planet is a big chunk of capital, so we get a lot of interest in the form of water, energy and other resources. Your capital doesn't get smaller as long as we don't exceed the interest, so the interest stays normal or grows with the capital. That is sustainability. On the flip side, if you exceed your interest, you use up your capital, which means that next time, your interest will be smaller. We are (oftentimes literally) eating away our capital right now, hugely over-consuming what our interest allows for sustainability. This means, as long as we don't stop this right now, it gets exponentially more difficult to recover our capital again in the future. Inform yourself about the impact of your actions. Most people only know the tip of the iceberg, and they're comfortable with that. *You* shouldn't be.

Now, we've talked about what makes your life as miserable as it is, but we didn't address who is responsible for that. The simplest answer I can give you is that you are responsible for it. Ouch. That hurt… You being miserable has led other people to believe living like that is alright, in turn making the world a bit more miserable, too. Remember the title. You are the reason. If you want to change the world, first change yourself. Because **the world won't just change while everyone is doing nothing.** You being you is part of the peer pressure, which is responsible for a lot of society's problems, like polarization and discrimination, because you influence others around you, too, even if it's not your intention.

Picture this: if everyone but you in a group starts to game together, you would be the weirdo for not joining the others, even if you have other interests you want to pursue. In contrast, if you game regularly and you persuade your friend to join you, now you might have placed a presumably bad habit in his/her life out of your egoistic reasons (which may or may not be valid).

I know, things like gaming are sometimes the only way people can come together without physical boundaries, which we increasingly see, the pandemic and the social isolation associated with it being the cause, and that's alright. If it's for the matter of socializing, no problem. But isn't it sad that we have to socially connect through a virtual world, even if the real world is still available to most individuals? Again, I don't want to blame the people that can only connect with their friends who are often miles away (in Germany for example) through the internet. Also, I respect people who actively upload to the internet for the sake of creating art or programs, whom we call developers, artists or producers (they create for others to consume). What they do is their job or their hobby. But you are likely not one of them. And we haven't even discussed the people who are bad role models with full intent, knowing that their actions are harmful, like drug dealers, dictators (I'm looking at you, Putin) or Facebook. They probably have (good or bad) reasons too, but having a reason to do something bad isn't an excuse that can easily be forgiven or respected.

It's really tragic that our society has come to play down the importance of mental health, most societies accepting drugs and over-consumption, and most of them not doing enough to counter the real-world problems that will hit hard in the future. Not just for them, but for others as well. I think most people know what is the right thing to do but most people seem to not act right. Hm… That's weird… **Once be the exception in this case, for you and for everyone else.**

I acknowledge most people aren't into self-improvement, philosophy, morals and that whole life advice shit. I'm sorry for you guys, reading this was probably a waste of time for you. But having the knowledge of how to improve your life is the first step to actually improving it, even if it's hard. I'm not saying you should like it…. Think about that. And maybe ignore the fact that this text was written by a weird 15-year-old who is addicted to YouTube, Netflix, music, meat, fast food and games, too. Or at least was…