

Because I love truth and love you I daresay:



Comfort Addiction is Harmful to Health

One of the serious diseases prevalent in the world and the Arab homeland is the "Comfort Addiction". To verify this all you need is walk down the street to see the coffee shops' regulars and measure the number of hours they spend there. And if you noticed how some of the limited wage employees spend their weekly and seasonal holidays, you realize that their majority don't consider such holidays an opportunity to release extra works and increase their income, but rather to spend most of the weekends in front of the screens or in the coffee shops where they waste precious time and money on titbits. The prevalence of this disease is not limited to those who engage in physically demanding work, but also those exerting intellectual efforts.

Some manifestations of the "comfort addiction" disease are the widespread misconceptions about the retirement concept. Throughout my career, I always heard people in their prime forties chanting words such as attaining a cumulative wealth to bring about early retirement. They did not mean merely stopping their functional work. They meant to relinquish working entirely to enjoy a leisure life. In this respect, they meant to dazzle those around them with their wealth. I have always felt that anybody flashing this suffers compiled problems.

I advocate that anybody reaching his sixties to retire without a wellness excuse is someone who missed the correct understanding of life. One feels life when he practices life that is practiced by work. Thus, retirement expels him or her from life. It is not a coincidence that the Arabic word for "retired" (motakaed), meaning "die while sitting", has almost the same synonym in English: "gone away or gone off". Therefore I say, don't stop working as long as you live. Never stop in order to give your life its meaning and purpose, otherwise life becomes empty. As your heart never stops beating, do not stop working. Extra comfort is harmful to health. Man should not be permitted to sit back with his mind put to unneeded rest. If you sensed a tendency for comfort, all you have to do is occupy yourself somehow. Men in their sixties are always amenable to job opportunities different from their original jobs. Thanks of the terrible transformation in communications, and various Internet uses, innovative jobs have become so much more lucrative.

As to those who talk about full retirement in the sense of suspending all activities

while still at their forties or even above, those people need to rethink their understanding of life and work.

On a psychological level, you won't be able to enjoy your night sleep unless you exhaust yourself at work in your day. Everyone has an invisible sensor measuring the degree of his yield as opposed to his ability to deliver. When night comes, his sensor sums up his performance in comparison to his ability to give. And no matter how skillful a human is in fooling others, he cannot entirely deceive himself. Therefore, upon receiving a modest reading, he gets grappled by a guilty conscience with feelings of remorse and anxiety, where his invisible sensor reminds him of his drawback of not to have done more.

By constant repetitions, these feelings will have a domineering effect over him. As he gets used to it, he will not help but keep to blame himself. This is where one becomes prone to laziness, a human addiction that nurtures the self-reproach into a permanent self-condemnation stripping humans from self-respect that may turn into a mental illness. Hence, we find psychiatric diseases more common among zombies. Whoever tolerates himself in lazing two minutes every day will be predisposed to laziness most of his time in later years. This is the killer disease with a cumulative impact ensuing on the long run.

In addition to correcting misconceptions about comfort, we need to strengthen our understanding of the importance of extra effort. It is not enough to ask ourselves to exert the effort required at both levels of study or work. We must incite ourselves to make extra efforts before waiting for others to ask us. We must take the extra effort, even if others do not ask us to do so. The culture of extra effort needs to be consolidated in our Arab world in particular.

Those who progressed in their working careers have done more than actually needed. Hence, as I repeated in my conversations, if you work more than your wages' value, you will find your future wages greater than your work's value. Happy people are more productive in their work: they make their co-workers happier, they are happy to work with others and turn out to be the most creative in solving problems. I had decided, on a personal level, that what helps me more than anything in my life is not how long I will live, but how much I can work in my life.

▪ Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, The Knowledge Worker, With you every month

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