

The Antidote

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I regularly read a number of Substack commentaries, and dip into more.

One who work I rest quite often is Dan Goyal, a doctor of US origin who now works in Scotland. I got to know of his medico-political activism on Twitter. His Substack is much more useful. It is called [The Antidote](#).

This is from a recent post:

It's more than 10 years since I started my research in neuroscience. I remember the sense of astonishment. Soon, I got used to how remarkable the brain was and the ingenuity of neuroscientists (and others) trying to learn more about it. But when I delved into the neuroscience of greed, I was once again greeted by that same sense of astonishment I had ten years previously.

I was astonished at the sheer volume of research undertaken on both Dispositional Greed (a consuming drive to constantly want more money and/or power) and Greed Personality Trait. So convincing is the evidence of neuropathology that the question as to whether Dispositional Greed is a mental disorder or not has now been replaced by the question of what type of disorder it is - addiction, psychopathy, or part of the 'dark triad'?

I was also astonished at just how substantial the brain changes are in those who are consumed by their greed. I was surprised to find that so disruptive is greed to the normal, healthy development of the brain that cortical regulation (prefrontal cortex) on the emotional system (limbic) was significantly lacking. Those with Dispositional Greed are essentially underdeveloped.

It has ramifications. For those consumed with greed, they are missing out on the best bits of life. Consistently, the evidence shows they are miserable. Indeed, they are so miserable that neuroimaging studies show actual changes to the structures of their brains. They are also angry and more likely to be aggressive. Evidence shows that those with Dispositional Greed seem to oscillate between being miserable and being

angry.

Perhaps though, the most stark (from the individual with Dispositional Greed's perspective) is the lack of higher cortical innervation. That is, the Greedy Brian has significant deficits in higher cognitive brain functions such as "decision making, reasoning, personality expression, maintaining social appropriateness, and other complex cognitive behaviours" (some of the known functions of the prefrontal cortex).

While difficult to quantify (neuroscience isn't quite advanced enough yet), there is very likely to be an impaired ability to appreciate art, poetry, nature, relationships, and other meaningful aspects of life.

As I say, the greedy brain is missing out on the best parts of life.

From this Dan went on to draw conclusions:

For those of us who lay in their wake (which is more and more of us as they take over society), the deficits in the greedy brain have more worrying ramifications.

Firstly, there is the obvious issue: greedy people will take more of our shared resources for themselves. This has been happening for centuries and is now set to peak once again. The consequences of this are far-reaching.

The direct consequences include the lack of resources for others in society. Poverty, health inequality, further decline in educational opportunities, and a much weaker safety net for the vast majority of people seem unavoidable at this stage.

Leading on from this are the 'indirect' consequences associated with the vast majority of society witnessing the gross inequity and disparity between normal, working people and the opulent lifestyles of the oligarchs. Be clear that this behaviour of the oligarchs is in direct opposition to the 'civil agreement'.

If you want to read the rest, [it is here](#). It is free. I recommend a subscription, which can also be free. This is someone thinking hard about what is happening hard in our society. That makes what he has to say worth reading.