

Pleasure: Life or Luxury?

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The year comes to its end and the balance of “wins and losses” starts to inhabit our minds. After the usual “ Oh God, time runs..” follows a lengthy list of outstanding things which we did or still left undone during the past year, some reflections on our life-style and, finally, the “New Year’s resolutions”.

Among all these considerations the word “pleasure” springs to mind or, to be more precise, the difficulties we have in adopting to live a more pleasurable life. If we consider that time does really run, and that life is short and without rehearsals, we should strive indeed to enjoy it to the best of our ability.

Today, people talk very little about pleasure and when it is discussed it is usually found to fall into forgetfulness again shortly afterwards.

So we ask ourselves what is “pleasure” anyway. Is it necessary in our lives, or is it a luxury? Would it be pure selfishness or alienation from the social problems of our times to organise our lives around pleasure?

There is a current assumption that human beings don’t really need pleasure. It postulates for instance, that at work, , pleasure is purely expendable or it should come later. Good humoured colleagues in the workplace are sometimes considered unreliable. In other words what is good is “suspicious” – pleasure would not be honoured in the same league as being serious.

I personally believe to live a pleasant life doesn’t necessarily mean that we have special life circumstances. I believe that pleasure can be life’s own substance. The idea that pleasure is adorned, luxurious or expendable may have originated itself in a moralist point of view which limited between what people need in order to survive and what they need because they want and enjoy in life. This idea creates a split. As if pleasure and life could not happen at the same time.

It is obvious that today very few of us can choose our own life-style. We are conditioned to identify ourselves through our jobs, those of us who are among the lucky workforce. In a climate where unemployment is rampant in our society we learn to live with below- standard working conditions. The daily frustrations in the workplace are just part of our struggle for survival. The bad-humoured boss is simply forgiven and we are forced to carry on without as much as confronting the situation. Very soon we find ourselves harbouring great wads of unexpressed resentment. What was left unsaid in the workplace we end up arguing with ourselves the whole night. And all because we fear our so-called image maybe damaged or still worse – destroyed. How many of us at the end of a weekend are faced with the late-Sunday evening-blues? “Oh God, tomorrow I have to face that hell again!” For most of us we condition ourselves to tolerate such situations. But as children we simply managed to say “I don’t like it! I won’t do it!”, without the drama that we as adults put ourselves through.

At some point in our lives we ask ourselves some fundamental questions “What do I really want from life”?. “ What is my truth”?. And we soon discover that not to live out in our lives who we

really are breathes not only physical but emotional and mental pain and suffering. This suffering manifests itself through depression, migraines, ulcers, stress, allergies, food and alcohol abuse to name but a few. To continue our lives in this non-committal, passive, victim state results in losing sight of what we really want and miss out on the joys of life.

Consequently, I find myself mulling over the idea of the New Year's Resolutions. As I reflect my life and my ambitions for the year ahead I feel I am in a better position to take responsibility for what happens to me. I believe pleasure and responsibility go hand in hand. And what better way to take a fresh look at life's challenges and choices by simply say "Yes" to a New Year's resolution. What might it be, I could ask? The answer can be found within ourselves!