

Mindfulness, Ego, and Incompatibility

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An Independent Research Document Proposal

Introduction

A summary of this context is how one can develop the findings of three key words and attempt to link the concepts together to form a question for their upcoming independent research essay next year. I've chosen the three key words; Mindfulness, ego and incompatibility, to help me generate ideas, thoughts and questions. I believe these three words hold counteractive arguments within each other, it can be constructed and deconstructed to develop new thoughts and questions. Each key word will be focusing on a philosopher or speaker that opposes the term to create numerous of discussions and debates. Mark R. Leary (Mindfulness), Dan Welden (Ego) and Dan Goleman (Incompatibility), which with co-exist alongside other philosophers and speakers, such as; Alan Watts (Mindfulness), Devdutt Pattanaik (Mindfulness), John Milton (Ego), Gregg Henriques (Ego), and Ludwig Wittgenstein (Incompatibility). Which I will be using their quotes/work to define the keyword(s).

Mindfulness

"I have realized that the past and future are real illusions, that they exist in the present, which is what there is and all there is"
(Watts, 1972, pp.3)

Mindfulness has many contexts it can be put under; however, its main primary origin comes from Buddhist and Hindus culture. Mindfulness is an act that Buddhists and Hindus have perfectly developed in order to achieve stillness and emptiness with oneself. Its sole purpose is to create enlightenment and freedom with your thoughts and body. It's a practice that has been used for millenniums, that is now growing rapidly in popularity in the Western world.

The act of being mindful can be categorized in many forms. Meditation was the original expression of mindfulness, which uses one of your many senses such as breathing to create calmness in the mind, it's a state in which a being is capable of both action and stillness, work and play. This is called calm-abiding meditation. It's a spiritual practice that "developed out of the teachings of the Indian prince known to

history as the Buddha, the Awakened One” (2018)

But to be mindful, is to also to be attentive.(Bhikkhu, 2008) “Mindfulness is what keeps the perspective of appropriate attention in mind. Modern psychological research has shown that attention comes in discrete moments.” (Bhikkhu, 2008) This can be considered a continuous attention, one reminding themselves moment after moment to focus, as we are wired to only be attentive for a short period of time, thus creating an attentive mindset if one chooses to return to. Bhikkhu describes mindfulness as an attention surplus, it keeps the purpose of your attention in mind.

Buddhas, uses meditation to empty one's mind. To clear all thoughts and distractions and to simply focus on a singular.

In the West mindfulness is more goal orientated. It uses the practice to achieve an objective. Usually to rid of the negatives in one's mind, such as, stress, anxiety and depression, or to be more in touch with an activity like yoga or doing the garden.

Regardless of the differences, they both serve a similar purpose, that is, to be aware.

Devdutt Pattanaik, a speaker, discusses the two different mythologys such as, linear thinking and cyclical thinking between the two worlds in a Ted talk called. *East vs West – The Myths That Mystify*.

In a summary of the talk, Pattanaik goes into the topic that two cultures have different perceptions of ‘The World’. This is simply due to, generations to generations of storytelling and their own mythology of beliefs. Its facts vs Emotions. Mythology vs Logos. My world versus Your World. One of the many “roots of clash of civilization” (Pattanaik, 2009) A very prolific speech that can be applied to the two definitions defying each other, despite talking about the same word.

It's what separates us as a society, which is why understanding the differences is important when Integrating science (the West) and mindfulness, (the East). This is particularly intended for the masses that are adjusted to Western science and are foreign to the Eastern traditions.

But to be aware, or in this case, to be self-aware is coming into fruition about things that are causing distractions to ones thought process. Thoughts and ideas that serve no purpose to their life, possibly changing the structure of their life.

Definition of ‘Medititation’ can be found in numerous of popular books. The meaning has been stretched thin and may possibly lost its entirety throughout its journey to Western hemisphere. Some go to the extent of calling it an ‘Awakening’. Though I must respectfully disagree that **“mindfulness is conditioned, and nirvana is not”** (Bhikkhu, 2008)

In the commencement of studying mindfulness as a key word, it led me into many directions that I found that could debate the definition of ‘mindfulness’. Exploration into Mark, R Learys book, evoked questions with numerous of topics that would counteract future arguments. Such as “What difference does a self-make?” (Leary, 2004, pp,3)

You are so accustomed to thinking about yourself that you may have never considered what an unusual ability this is or what life would be lifelike if you couldn't do it. How would you be different

if you were unable to focus on or think about yourself?
(Leary, 2004, pp, 3)

This quote specifically led to contemplation of other sub-genre words such as, awakening, illusions, mythology, flow asportation, differences and culture. All that can be taken under further development to reaching an emphatic question to give rise to this proposal.

Ego

"The mind is its own place, and itself can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n"
(Milton, 2014, pp.11)

The subject of ego has its complexities, and some may argue that without ego, we'd be nothing. Oxford Dictionary defines 'ego' as that part of the mind that uses external sources as a need of validation and self-acceptance. (Oxford Reference, 2020)

Ego is a latin word for 'i', and has usually meant self.

Although the definition above isn't morally incorrect. In psychology ego is identified with the Freudian Psychology. A work based on Sigmund Freud principles. "Freud conceived of the ego as the psychological apparatus that regulated sexual and aggressive impulses and navigated the tension between those impulses and the demands and values of society" (Henriques, 2013)

It's a self-conscious system that behaves on one's thoughts, feelings and actions to validate one's self and to those in their surroundings. It's how we behave around certain people and in certain events. Nowadays I feel it can correlate to how the younger generation chooses to present themselves on social media, which usual differs to who they are in real life. Is this because of the easy access to validation and support they will receive online?

In addition to that, humans strive off social acceptance and validation. In olden times this is usually earned. Mainly through a sport, a profession or simply just being charismatic. This can still be traced back to when human civilization were once hunters and gatherers, being an excellent hunter meant you bring food and shelter to your tribe, earning respect and approval to those in your group usually resulting in you becoming the leader or higher up in the food chain.

Alternatively, as time goes on, simple things such as being physically good looking or smart, earns your place in the social status ladder. With Instagram being one of the top many social platforms to self-promote it makes sense that egoism is now a massive discussion.

Though, im not necessarily saying that ego is bad. Referring to my previous statement, it's how we work when socialising. Humans are meant to socialise and to be in a tribe, but this is a topic of one of the main components of our selves – ego comes in three forms.

Ego - Which is essentially the core part of us that is influenced by the external world.

Id Ego – It's the primitive and instinctive element of our personality. It responds to the basic urges, needs and desires. Usually driven by sex, materialistic matters and social status.

And finally,

Super Ego – This system develops very early in life and integrates the morals and values of society in which the being learns usually from their parents, siblings and their upbringing in general. This can commonly be linked to why many people suffer with anxiety, because it also has the function of persuading the ego to turn to moralistic goals rather than simply realistic ones and to strive for perfection. (simply psychology, 2019)

It's the fundamental part of our personality, and I believe it what's creates uniqueness in how we strive for success and the desires we seek from our surroundings.

Ego, is a very broad topic and what was great about the exploration of this key word is the potential question of conversation for an independent research document, such as “Can you succeed without the ego?” Can we have the desire for excellence without ego? Are humans capable of achieving greater things without the self, making it a task or singular approach in life? Is it an important aspect of what makes people so successful? Especially in Hollywood.



(Welden, 2004)

In contrast to the discussion above, Welden believes that egoism is essentially what limits people's freedom in creation.

Dan Welden is core practitioner in the arts of print making. He has strong beliefs that counteracts the concept of ego and believes it's what creates a barrier between the muse and the artist.

Artists have egos, everyone has egos. (Welden, 2019)

In the omega video, Welden states “when one is truly involved with the process between the subject and self. There is no ego. And that’s where the work tends to come forward and become better” He uses workshops to delve into people’s understanding of innovation but on a deeper level, giving them the freedom to explore. Dan Welden encourages people to be original and self-aware when creating art. Being in touch with oneself and releasing any attachments to being “perfect”.

Incompatibility

"One aspect of a successful relationship is not just how compatible you are, but how you deal with your incompatibility."
(Goleman, 1995, pp 84)

The meaning of incompatibility is essentially two beings unable to coexist together. Nonetheless, this can be applied to objects. The way a magnet repels another magnet when it's simply not attracted to its magnetic metals or how a wild animal and human utterly cannot live in harmony if forced into one room. It's simply not being to work together due to basic indifferences (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020)

In Hindi, their definition of incompatibility differs ever so slightly. It's the incompatibility of "not keeping in touch with what is correct or proper" or "Incapable of being used with or connected to other devices or components without modification" (Gyan app, 2020)

To be compatible is to be, "capable of existing together" whilst incompatibility is "association because incongruous, discordant, or disagreeing" (Merriam Webster, 1828)

Furthermore, incompatibility typically has a similar meaning globally and culturally, and is usually referred to the incompatibility between two people, this term can also relate to business and the unsuited ability to hold two or more objectives/tasks. Similarly, to how not everyone's body is compatible with certain medicines

This can also relate back to my findings of the key word 'Mindfulness' and the incompatibility of two mythology/cultures, and the constant clash of two different world views.

Ludwig Wittgenstein was a philosopher who worked particularly in the fields of logic, mind and language. He had developed a philosophy of the incompatibility of colours. His teachings would be combination of the subjects he studied in. In Wittgenstein On Colour Exclusion: Not fatally Mistaken, Lugg Andrew discusses the Wittgenstein way of thinking about the occurrence of two colours.

His remarks in the Tractatus about the impossibility of the simultaneous occurrence of two colours at a point in the visual field sit comfortably with what he says in the rest of the book, his discussion of mathematical physics above all. Furthermore his second thoughts about the impossibility were a consequence, not the cause, of the turn his philosophy subsequently took.
(Lugg, A, 2015, pp 1 – 21)

Further research had got me thinking that will the word incompatibility always carry negative connotations, however can semiology be applied to this context and manipulate the intentions of what the word defines? In relation to Wittgenstein findings, he discusses the conflict between the occurrence of two colours, whilst using mathematics. This is interesting to me as he ruled out emotions and feelings, and instead used science to back up his theory. Which led me to question if the word incompatibility is used in context where it shouldn't? Is incompatibility linked with emotions? Or is it more of a logical term?

Alternately, my exploration of the word incompatibility had produced several topics of discussions, ones that would hinder the core concept of what it means. Going against its values and the entirety of its definition such as, the inharmonious workings of two opposing colors.

Orange and red on a canvas would be deemed as a sharp unpleasant aesthetic, as they do not compliment each other. My question to go against this would be "Adding a third colour will create a different energy on the canvas, making the two colours work in harmonization. Can this theory be applied to relationships?" Relating back to the quote stated at the start of my findings for this keyword.

"One aspect of a successful relationship is not just how compatible you are, but how you deal with your incompatibility."
(Goleman, 1995, pp 84)

Which is an alternative way of looking at the concept. Are two people incompatible simply because they have not found their third colour? Creating alignment, that connects them? Or is the whole incompatibility more of an internal problem rather than a co-problem, one almost, being incompatible with themselves?

An exploration into the word Incompatibility, gave me opportunities to broaden further investigation that will help me generate a conclusive question induced upon this proposal. The keyword opened ideas of other sub-genre words such as semiology, theory, harmonization, logic, emotions, and coexisting. All which will be considered.

The research into the three keywords, led to many alternative sub-genre words, as well as generating a working question proposed for the independent research document. The relationship between the three keywords, holds many strong questions that can create counteractive arguments and debates with one another such as "Can Mindfulness and The Ego live in Harmonization?" "Is Ego A Damaging Part of Our Core Selves?" "Will Mindfulness Prevent Us from Achieving Greater Things in Life?" "Is the act of being mindfulness an egoism trait?" "Is incompatibility a fixed mindset? And can the practice of meditation help failed relationships?" "Can one being mindful but be in a flow state?" "If civilization was self-aware would that be damaging to the economy?" "Is being self-aware a selfish act?" "Is mindfulness an illusion?" "Can egoism only live in successful people and not artists?"

The terms and concepts of indifferences, incompatibility, egoism, harmonization, fixed, selfish, creativity, culture, relationships, mythology, flow asportation, self-aware, success, logic, emotions, perfect, and awakening, have been contemplated for further development within my independent research paper, under my working evolving question for next year.

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