

An Overview of Destination Addiction

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research paper is on a lesser-known but extremely pervasive addiction afflicting millions of people today, many who don't even know it. Whenever we hear the word addiction, we usually think of drugs, alcohol and smoking; but there exists a different kind of addiction known as Destination Addiction. It implies getting addicted to the idea or a belief that possessing a better job, more money, lavish house and expensive car will make us more happy and successful. We keep rushing around and forget to live and be grateful for the present moments of life. Individuals keep chasing happiness through their destinations or goals of life without realizing that happiness is internal to us. Thus, this study is in a growing line of research that attempts to draw relationships between core beliefs of one's mindset and happiness.

Keywords: *Destination Addiction, Happiness, Positive Psychology*

All of our lives, we are taught to plan for the future. While there is nothing wrong with planning for the future, we cannot get so consumed chasing our dreams that we forget about what is right in front of us. Setting goals we'd like to obtain are great incentives to help us along in our trudge of the happy road of destiny, but we should make sure they are healthy, reasonable, and attainable ones.

The term 'Destination Addiction' was coined by Dr. Robert Holden (a British psychologist the Director of The Happiness Project and Success Intelligence) in his 2011 book *Authentic Success: Essential Lessons and Practices from the World's Leading Coaching Program on Success Intelligence*. Robert Holden (2011) defines Destination Addiction as a 'preoccupation with the idea that *happiness* is in the next place, the next job and with the next partner. Until you give up the idea that happiness is somewhere else, it will never be where you are'.

According to Holden (2011), individuals who suffer from Destination Addiction believe that success is a destination. They are addicted to the idea that the future is where success is, happiness is, and heaven is. Each passing moment is merely a ticket to get to the future. They

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live in the “not now,” they are psychologically absent, and they disregard everything they have. We are always on the run, on the move, and on the go. Our goal is not to enjoy the day, it is to get through the day. We have always to get to somewhere else first before we can relax and before we can savor the moment. But we never get there. There is no point of arrival. We are permanently dissatisfied. The feeling of success is continually deferred. We live in hot pursuit of some extraordinary bliss we have no idea how to find. Destination Addiction is a nonstop approach to inner peace.

Destination addiction is an unhealthy obsession with what lies ahead. It stems from discontentment with the current situation that God has placed us in. It is not always a new location that we are obsessed with getting to. Sometimes it is new friendships, a new boyfriend/girlfriend, a new job, or a new home. We are desperate for change, because we believe that we will finally be happy once we reach the next destination (Holden, 2010). This comes from our flawed human nature, which desires things of this world to fill the space that God should occupy.

Destination Addiction is an attempt to get on with life faster in the hope that we will enjoy our lives better. And yet our constant speeding means we frequently run past golden opportunities for grace and betterment. It is this never-ending pursuit of happiness that drives us to spend more and more money on things. But things do not bring joy. Things bring worry. Things bring temporary happiness that masks some deeper pain. For instance, those who consider themselves “emotional spenders” don’t really have a spending problem. They are using shopping as a way of putting on an emotional band-aid to make some other kind of pain go away, much in the same way someone who overeats does so to combat depression, or loneliness.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A detailed probe into the vast amount of research in the area of destination addiction and happiness revealed that the available research can be broadly categorized into two major sections which are discussed separately in the ensuing section below i.e.

a. Symptoms of Destination Addiction

Destination addiction creeps upon us over time. An individual just cannot wake up one day as a destination addict. The addiction grows slowly and often starts with one experience, probably one that we have long forgotten about, that involved a job, a lover, something our parents might have said in passing, a tiny taste of success or failure on our life journey that may have inspired or demoralised us.

Destination addicts often do not live in the present moment. They reflect on the past (mostly on what they could have done better instead of what they did well), and project themselves into the future, speculating on how they will reach their goals as soon as possible. These addicts have an underlying feeling of anxiety in everything they do, an uneasy feeling that something is missing (Kalinda, 2016). The interesting thing about destination addicts is that, sometimes, they’re not even sure what the destination they are trying to reach is. They just

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know that they have to get there and that once they do, things will be better, bigger, brighter, and they will be happier. It's an illusion that they mistake for reality.

Destination addicts are permanently impatient with themselves. The schedule they set for themselves is so demanding that they end up driving their lives harder and faster. They refuse to forgive their own self if they cannot keep up as they are addicted to the pursuit of progress. Destination addiction often works against us, because we are too busy running to be receptive and hence we feel empty and dissatisfied. Following symptoms are given by Holden (2011)

- Whatever you are doing, you are always thinking about what comes next.
- You cannot afford to stop because you always have to be somewhere else.
- You are always in a hurry even when you don't need to be.
- You always promise that next year you will be less busy.
- Your dream home is always the next home you plan to buy.
- You don't like your job but it has good prospects for the future.
- You never commit fully to anything in case something better comes along.
- You hope the next big success will finally make you happy.
- You always think you should be further ahead of where you are now.
- You have so many forecasts, projections, and targets that you never enjoy your life.

b. Beating Destination Addiction

The answer to beat Destination Addiction lies in recognizing that happiness never comes from a destination. Happiness is a choice we make, every day, no matter where we are. It comes from recognizing that circumstances don't bring happiness, things don't bring happiness, achievements don't bring happiness. Happiness comes from inside us, from an attitude of thanksgiving. It flows out of hope, knowing we stand on an unshakeable foundation of faith in God. And it comes from paying attention, from treasuring the people, the creative gifts and the relationships we have been blessed with today (Mann, 2014).

Once we become aware of our destination addiction and its negative effect on our lives, we can start the healing process. None of us are immune to destination addiction and we all have times where we have to convince ourselves that better times are ahead just to make it through the day. But the key to defeating destination addiction is to find happiness with the life you have and to achieve the goals that are important to you, not the ones you think will impress everyone else (Sharee, 2016).

There's nothing wrong with having goals, creating vision boards and generally wanting more for your life. We all believe that life is about progress and every day we work on being a better person than we were the day before. The problem comes when our definition of better is solely based on your next move, material things and what looks good in society (Holden, 2015). But, when we become aware of being ensnared in the tentacles of destination addiction, we should make efforts to be more conscious of the blessings around us at that very moment. A daily gratitude practice, be it writing in a gratitude journal or sending out daily thank you emails/texts to people who have made our day better will definitely work in

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this regard. Each one of us should start focusing on creating a space in which happiness flourishes rather than diminishes. When we declare ourselves content with what we have and who we are we can beat the addiction of waiting to be happy (Glick, 2011). We can live quite happily in the now. Through contentment we can be happy with *this* house, and *this* car, and *these* clothes, and beat the cravings for more.

Giving time to others is often the best remedy for Destination Addiction. By working with and for the good of other people, we forget our desire for something better and we begin to feel the joy that is always waiting as we give. Surround yourself with people who support and encourage your vision while grounding you in the present.

Positive Psychology and Destination Addiction

For a person who is always been addicted to their addiction to their destinations for seeking happiness, positive psychology offers a rewarding and meaningful direction for the future and an acceptance of the negative aspects of their life. A person should be grounded in the present and experience the occurring emotional and physical changes. This can help to reduce anxieties and stress, which can cloud a person's judgement and dampen efforts to change behaviours.

There are three central concerns to positive psychology: positive emotions, positive individual traits and positive institutions. *Positive emotions* involves the study of contentment with the past, happiness in the present and hope for the future. *Positive individual traits* is the study of strengths and virtues, such as capacity for love and work, courage, compassion, resilience, creativity, integrity, self-knowledge and moderation. Understanding *positive institutions* is the study of what issues make better communities, such as responsibility, teamwork, purpose, leadership and tolerance.

Overriding these concerns are the three main areas of research: pleasant life, engaged life and meaningful life. Each examines what elements encourage a person to live a fulfilling and happy life, and what things fail to motivate a person. A motivated, engaged and fulfilled person tends to report higher levels of happiness for longer periods of time. A person who has short-lived successes, little motivation in their primary job and low levels of identity will report higher levels of unhappiness.

CONCLUSION

In the bottom line, Destination Addiction is the false belief that happiness comes from outside yourself. It is easy to blame your circumstances and say "oh, once my situation will change, I will be happy", because it means that you are not in charge of yourself. In reality, however, being happy comes from taking responsibility and working on your attitude. Learn how to get the most out of what you already have and understand that even if you move to that better place (new job, new relationship, new city), your basic problems will still be the same. They will only change if you change from within.

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We can look forward to the future, but it is important to cherish each moment in the present. The only thing we can really be certain of is this moment, this day, this time. So, make the moment count. Cherish the small things. See each moment of your life as an opportunity to learn, right where you are, and seize as many opportunities as you can to grow. Happiness is attained through simple luxuries of life: heartfelt conversations, a hug from your mother or father, and the moments where you realize that your health is the priority and, in return, you feel thankful.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further research can be conducted on different variables such as well-being, life satisfaction, hope in relation to destination addiction. Also, investigations may be needed to focus on gender differences and across different cultures as this would enable to modify the concept according to the needs and cultural background. It is suggested to future studies to design and administer a training module on beating destination addiction that would show more lasting impact if administered over longitudinal training period of time.

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