

Stupidity as an Addiction

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Let us start with a couple of definitions and see if there is an overlap showing that stupidity is by definition an addiction. First, "Addiction"- which is "A compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance. Second, "Stupidity"- "A normal, dysfunctional learning process which occurs when a schema (belief system) formed by linguistic biases and social norms acts via the neurotic paradox to establish a compelling positive feedback system which carries behavior to maladaptive excesses". The main difference between these two definitions is "Substance". That is, an addiction is caused by an abuse of a substance whereas stupidity is not.

Nevertheless, there is enough similarity in the two processes in that an addiction is compulsive and stupidity is compelling by being an established positive feedback system which leads to maladaptive behavioral excesses. It is this compulsive/compelling element which links the two and qualifies stupidity as an addiction.

Just as a drug addict struggles to free him/herself from the control of a foreign substance, a stupid person struggles against the entrapment of verbal definitions and misperceptions. It is really the positive feedback nature of drug addiction and stupidity which links the two. The drug addict wants more; a person overcome by stupidity cannot recognize what "Too much" is. The problem with stupidity is that by the very nature of the process of misperception, it is impossible-or highly unlikely-that the victim can appreciate his/her condition.

Hence, we all qualify as stupid in some regard. The real antidote to stupidity is recognition of countervailing factors in the environment. As long as definitions can be stretched to cover contradictory information, a stupid pattern of behavior will persist. Thus, the real cure for stupidity is awareness of unwelcome information which demands it be accepted simply because it is valid. It is this issue of validity which is so difficult for those enthralled with themselves to overcome. In this sense, science offers the best pathway out of a maladaptive (stupid) morass in that standards of validity are easier to identify and accept in science than in more subjective fields. Not that stupidity does not afflict scientists: they routinely dispute the validity or relevance of data which contradict their favorite theories. Nevertheless, with a standard for right and wrong and another for relevance, people are given an opportunity to overcome any addiction they have for incorrect ideas and behavioral patterns.

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