

Developing Soft Skills and Personality
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Lecture - 16
Habits: Breaking Bad Habits

Hello everyone, welcome back to NPTEL MOOC course on Developing Soft Skills and Personality. I am Prof. T. Ravichandran from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT, Kanpur. We are on the third week of this course and we are almost in the middle of the third week, already three lectures have been covered under habits. This week exclusively, I am focusing on habits because as I have been telling you in the introductory lecture that it is the habit that is going to make or more your career as well as your life.

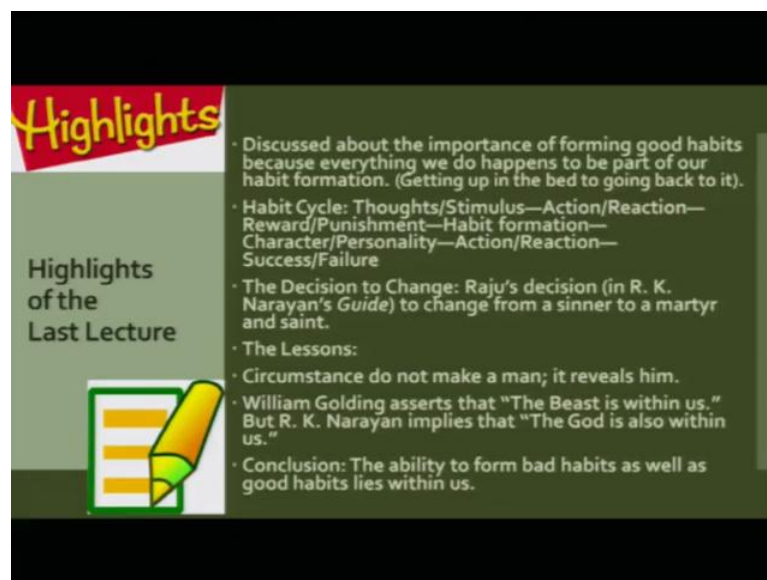
So, we are being talking about habits the significant and all that in this lecture. Particularly, I am going to focus on the reasons why we are not able to break bad habits particularly, the emotionally sought of emotional breakups which I give you the bad habits, which you are not able to break so easily. So, that is something that I want to focus on in this module and before I start let us take a quick highlights of what I did in the last lecture.

In the last lecture, I discussed about the importance of forming good habits because everything we do happens to be part of our habit formation whether it is getting up in the bed, the first thing that you do in the morning and till the end when you go back to it. If you look at it every small thing that you do the way you are getting up and after getting up what you do. So, you have a cup of coffee or you do not have it, you just look up your favorite God or you just listen to music or you just meditate or you just walk, go out what do you do or you just check mails or you just see the updates on Facebook or Whatsapp or you just make phone calls, what you do as soon as you get up most of the things just habits and even the root in which you go to your root in which you are go to your department collage that again becomes a kind of habit.

You prefer the same root and then you keep going on that again and again and then when you come back to the bed. So, how many pillows you use for sleeping. So, do you do you cover yourself or not. So, how do you lying on the bed side way facing up facing down. So, all this things again is something that you initially bring your thought to it, but then slowly started forming it and then and then while lying on the bed do you have to make some movements do you have to shake your body move your legs. So, that you feel sleepy or can you just remind passive and then you get the sleep do you get up frequently when you are in sleep or you can be in deep sleep, all this things or actually part of your habit.

And then I talk about the habit cycle. So, which starts for the kind of thought or stimulus and then continues with the action reaction that you give to it and then you get a reward or a punishment and based on which you form the habit which determine your character as well as personality again, you reinforce this with another action or reaction contributing to your success or failure in life.

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Highlights

Highlights of the Last Lecture

- Discussed about the importance of forming good habits because everything we do happens to be part of our habit formation. (Getting up in the bed to going back to it).
- Habit Cycle: Thoughts/Stimulus—Action/Reaction—Reward/Punishment—Habit formation—Character/Personality—Action/Reaction—Success/Failure
- The Decision to Change: Raju's decision (in R. K. Narayan's *Guide*) to change from a sinner to a martyr and saint.
- The Lessons:
 - Circumstance do not make a man; it reveals him.
 - William Golding asserts that "The Beast is within us." But R. K. Narayan implies that "The God is also within us."
- Conclusion: The ability to form bad habits as well as good habits lies within us.

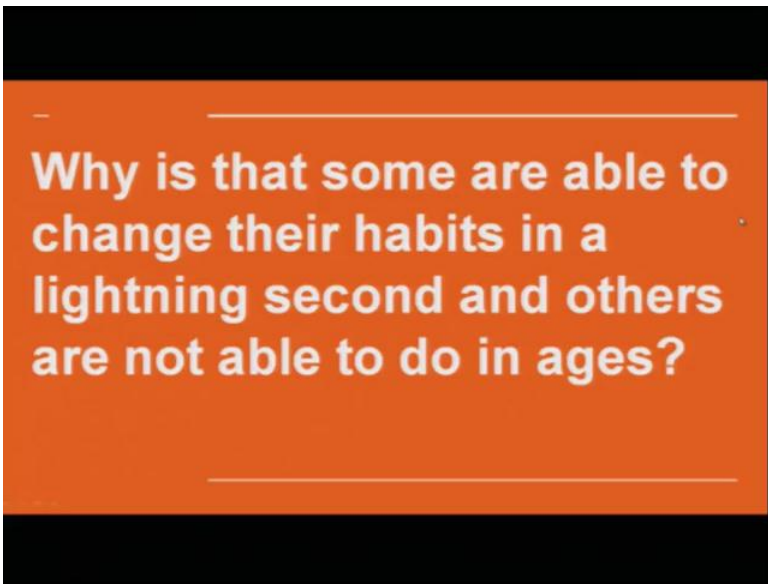
Now, I also talk to you about the decision to change you know that accumulated lot of bad habits, but would you like to change and what will give you the decision. So, in that

contest I was referring to the small anecdote from R. K. Narayan's Guide in which the character Raju decides to change from a sinner to your martyr and a saint.

Now, that transformation comes to him even after spending decades of his life as a kind of sinner, as a thief and all that and he even spends some time in the prison and that comes at a very crucial movement and the lessons that we learn from that was that circumstance is not something that actually make some and it reveals him. So, it is the circumstance that will tell you whether you are becoming a sinner or a saint it reveals the inner core in you and that kind of change that comes and that goes to the intrinsic value in you. So, that will remain forever.

And then I also concluded by saying that writers especially the modern writers had a kind of gloomy view about man and William Golding particularly in lot of the fly key asserted that the beast is within us that is all the animal qualities all the bad qualities, evil qualities he said are all within us, but if you look at the way R. K. Narayan concluded the novel he seem to impelling that the God is also within us. The conclusion if you understand that God and beast are metafile for forming good habits and bad habits. So, you understand the ability to form bad habits as well as good habits lies within us.

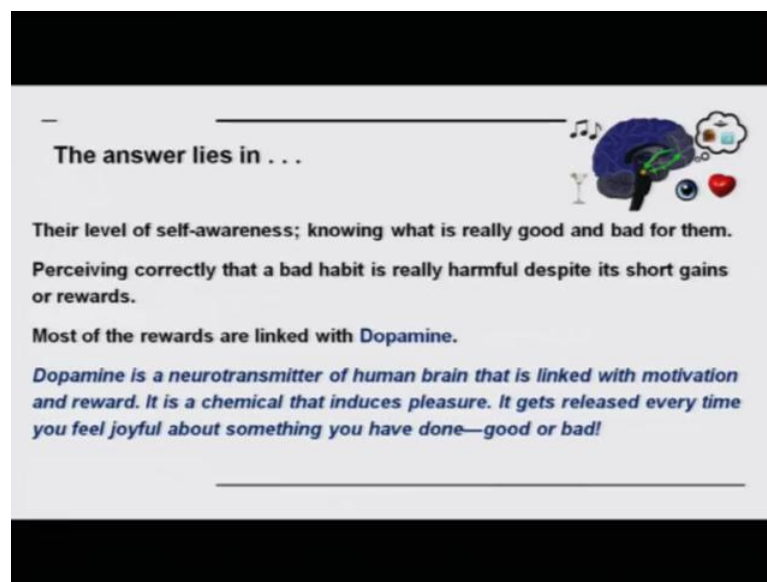
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Why is that some are able to change their habits in a lightning second and others are not able to do in ages?

Now, let us analyze the fundamental question why is it that some are able to change their habits in a lightning second just like Raju although, he took these two to decide, but still you, but still he was able to change habit that he was used to, was able to control the craving for eating and others are not able to do that in ages. Some people even after trying so many years they are not able to change and some people just in a lightning movement just one second they think I will change and I will change and then they quit and then they completely change.

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The answer lies in . . .

Their level of self-awareness; knowing what is really good and bad for them.

Perceiving correctly that a bad habit is really harmful despite its short gains or rewards.

Most of the rewards are linked with Dopamine.

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter of human brain that is linked with motivation and reward. It is a chemical that induces pleasure. It gets released every time you feel joyful about something you have done—good or bad!

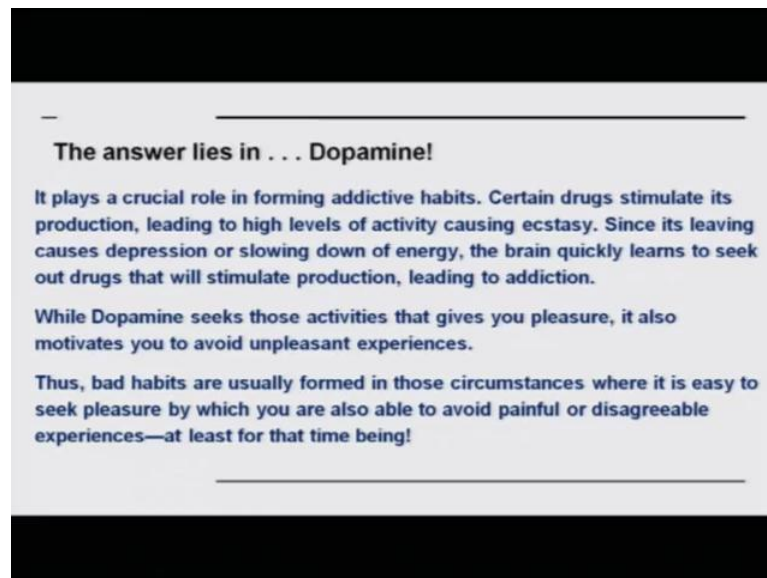
Now, what is it responsible, where is the answer lying in the answer lies in something call dopamine so, but before I go to that now how can they actually change the first thing they need is it depends on the level of self awareness. So, how much they are affair about themselves in the introductory week. So, one of lectures was focused on developing yourself awareness asking probing questions about your merits and demerits and understanding what is really good and what is really bad, and choosing your goals and acting accordingly and I also talk to you about perceptions.

Now, some people perceive a bad habit correctly has a bad habit and they know that it is really harmful, but some others are not able to identify that it is a bad habit and then

despite it short gains or rewards they are not able to come out of this short gain and think about long term rewards.

Now, most of these rewards are linked with dopamine. Now, if you understand this part of our brain will be able to more or less controlled bad habits and try to develop good habits. Now, dopamine is a neurotransmitter of human brain that is linked with motivation and reward. It means that it is responsible for motivation and reward. It is also called as the motivation molecule. It is actually chemical that induces pleasure you get a feeling that you won a lottery even that. So, even that something sparks in your brain and makes you feel happy it says that you are now happy. So, you go and salute wait you get sweet and give it to people and makes others happy, it gets released every time you feels joyful about something you have done. Now, the interesting part of this dopamine is it get released whether you do something based on a good habit or even on a bad habit.

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It does not make a difference now, why should we know about dopamine because it plays a crucial role in forming addictive habits again whether good or bad it plays a crucial role in forming it. Particularly in terms of bad habits, certain drugs stimulate its production. So, use of certain drugs actually causes the secretion of dopamine in the

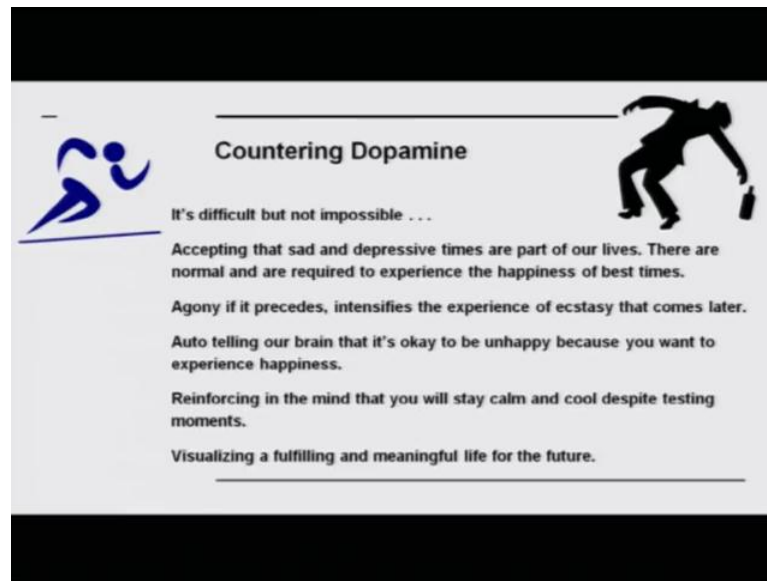
brain leading to high levels of activity and causing ecstasy. So, you are in a state of euphoria when you are able to take some drugs which induce dopamine makes you feel that euphoric state, but it is leading will cause depression or slowing down of energy.

Since, it is leaving is doing this the brain quickly learn to seek those kind of drugs that will stimulate production leading to addiction. It means since you are used to one kind of drug that will produce this dopamine and then gives you that euphoric feeling the withdrawal the leaving of that will make you feel somewhat low in energy sometimes even somewhat depress. So, brain starts seeking actively to those kinds of drugs that will stimulate this production. So, that is the problem with brain.

And then once you going for the drug again and again you are making that as addictive bad behavior why dopamine seeks those activities that gives you pleasure, but it also motivates you to avoid unpleasant experiences. So, on the one hand it tries to give you those activities that will give you pleasure, but it also motivates you to avoid unpleasant experience. So, for example, you know that you are not done the job. So, the boss is going to shout at you. So, colleagues tell you take this drug you take this drinks.

So, when you go on face the boss, if he shouting at you, you will not feel it. So, will not feel very sensitive about you and it would not hurt you. So, try that now you want to avoid unpleasant experience. So, then again you try to produce that using drugs thus bad habit or usually formed in those circumstances where it is easy to seek pleasure by which you are also able to avoid painful or disagreeable experiences at least for that time being. Now, let us understand more about dopamine.

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Countering Dopamine

It's difficult but not impossible . . .

Accepting that sad and depressive times are part of our lives. There are normal and are required to experience the happiness of best times.

Agony if it precedes, intensifies the experience of ecstasy that comes later.

Auto telling our brain that it's okay to be unhappy because you want to experience happiness.

Reinforcing in the mind that you will stay calm and cool despite testing moments.

Visualizing a fulfilling and meaningful life for the future.

Let us see how we can counter it, what we can do in order to counter especially in terms of forming this addictive behavior apparently it looks like difficult, but it is not impossible accepting for example, that sad and depressive times are part of our lives. So, that itself make a feel us not to seek pleasure even when we are in our low times we need to understand that they are normal and required to experience the happiness of best times. If we have endless holidays, you feel sick of them and you would like to go to job and the other way round, if you are working without any leave, you long for holidays. So, life is a perfect of mixture of happiness and sorrow.

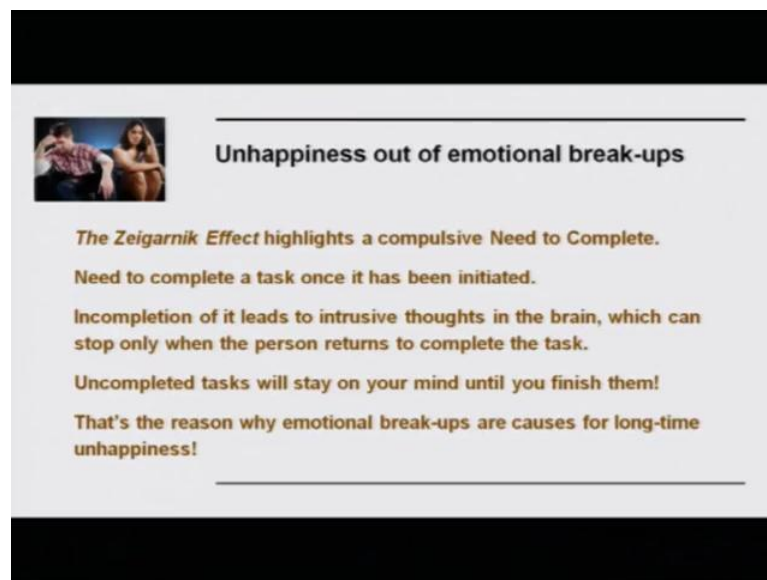
So, if all the time seek only happiness in the form of pleasure and if you want to avoid sorrow, that is going to make your brain seek more and more of bad habits that will produce dopamine in you. So, accepting that sad and depressive types or part of our lives is one important thing that we should keep our mind and then we have to understand that agony that is great pain even if it precedes intensifies the experience of ecstasy that comes later you know great sorrow only then you are understand great amount of joy.

So, allow yourself to experience great pain before, so that you can experience greater joy later and then auto telling our brain people call that us self hypnosis. So, telling something to our mind all the time that something is good, job is easy something will

work better for us. Now, in this case, telling our brain that it is to be unhappy because you can say that I want that I can experience happiness later. So, it is cool I am unhappy I am depressed, but what. So, I will experience it, so that I will enjoy the happy movement that come later instead of thinking that I am depressed. So, I will go to drugs or I will not do any other work I will just stop, I will just go walk alone, I will illuminate myself and then I will do nothing.

Now, the next thing that you can do is reinforcing in the mind that will you stay calm and cool disk by stressing movements telling your mind again and again, even if despite testing time I will remain cool and calm nothing can affect you and overall trying to visualize a fulfilling and meaningful life for the future. So, that will reduce the brain to seek for those thing that will make you develop bad habits and then make you as slave t them in the long run. So, think of these things whenever you are in the negative tendency to produce dopamine using some bad habits.

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Unhappiness out of emotional break-ups

The Zeigarnik Effect highlights a compulsive Need to Complete.

Need to complete a task once it has been initiated.

Incompletion of it leads to intrusive thoughts in the brain, which can stop only when the person returns to complete the task.

Uncompleted tasks will stay on your mind until you finish them!

That's the reason why emotional break-ups are causes for long-time unhappiness!

Now, let us focus on the unhappiness that normally comes out of emotional breakups. Now, before I go to this I want you to understand another interesting psychological aspect of our human brain and its tendency in working in terms of completing a task or not completing. I want you to understand this term called the Zeigarnik Effect. The

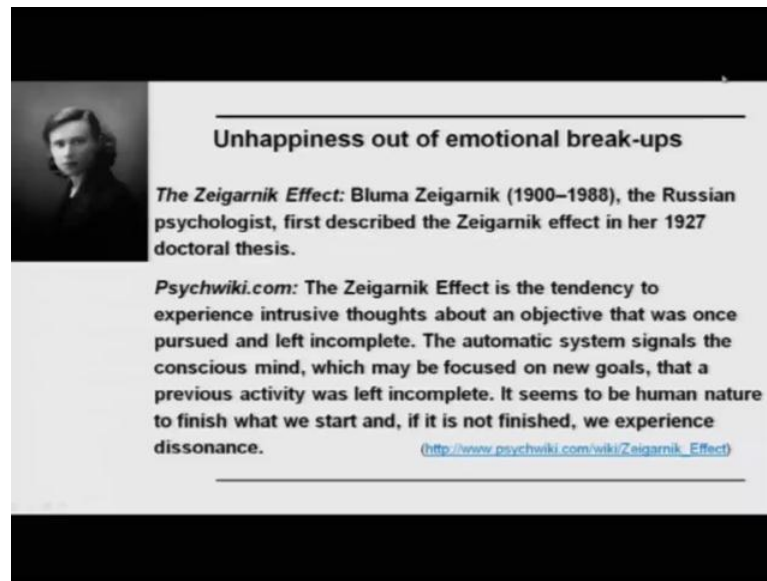
Zeigarnik Effect highlights a compulsive need to complete it is a need to complete just like need to achieve it is a need to achieve.

Now, what is this need to complete? The need to complete a task once it has been initiated incompleteness of it leads to intrusive thoughts in the brain which can stop only when the person returns to complete the task. This means if you start a task and then you leave it somewhere in between and you go on start some other task. Now, when you do this task of the previous one that was left uncompleted will come and hijack your brain it will keep coming until you go back and complete the task, you will not be able to focus on the other task that you have taken. So, this effect is called as this Zeigarnik Effect, uncompleted task will stay on your mind until you finish them.

Now, that is the reason why emotional breakups are causes for long time unhappiness why? So, many tasks like let us say become the situation of a boy and girl who were in love with each other and then they want to get married. Now, let us say they were in a relationship for about three years and they were planning so many things, the planning to have children, they were planning to a different place, they were planning to buy a kind of car. Now, all this planning that was done together for the entire life even it is done mentally and certain things which have started already.

Now, they remain incomplete the day a person decides to leave the other person for whatever reason it may be wants one person leaves the other one, the other one keeps thinking why? Why did she leave me and the girl thinks that why did this man leave me? Is the other girl looking better, she more intelligent or am I not loving him enough what went wrong? Now, in all these things innocent this Zeigarnik Effect is happening the thoughts go back to the old movements again and again because. So, many promises which were made or remaining incomplete who gave this term.

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Unhappiness out of emotional break-ups

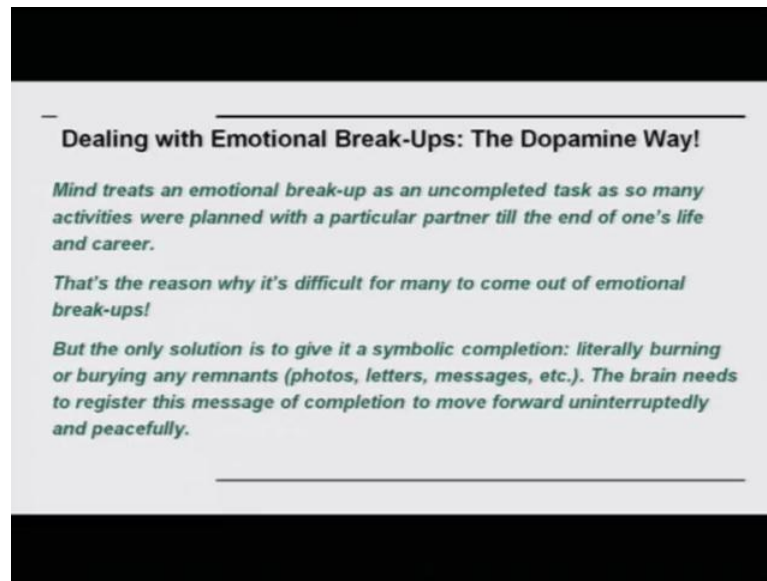
The Zeigarnik Effect: Bluma Zeigarnik (1900–1988), the Russian psychologist, first described the Zeigarnik effect in her 1927 doctoral thesis.

Psychwiki.com: The Zeigarnik Effect is the tendency to experience intrusive thoughts about an objective that was once pursued and left incomplete. The automatic system signals the conscious mind, which may be focused on new goals, that a previous activity was left incomplete. It seems to be human nature to finish what we start and, if it is not finished, we experience dissonance. (http://www.psychwiki.com/wiki/Zeigarnik_Effect)

So, this is Bluma Zeigarnik, the Russian psychologist. She first described the Zeigarnik Effect in her 1927 doctoral thesis and then the simple definition that we get from Psychwiki dot com it says that the Zeigarnik Effect is the tendency to experience intrusive thoughts about an objective that was once perceived and left incomplete the automatic system signals. The conscious mind which may be focused on new goals that a previous activity was left incomplete it seems to be human nature to finish what we start and if it is not finished we experience dissonance.

So, dissonance is this how many. So, we feel that we are completely in disorder, we that is emotionally mentally even sometimes we physically feel that there is something that struggling us and the thoughts which keep coming to our mind saying that is still un left and that we will remember more than a thought of something that has been completed that is the other implication of this Zeigarnik Effect that you will always remember that uncompleted tasks, the incomplete activities much more than the one that you complete. In fact, sometimes you do not even remember the task that you complete.

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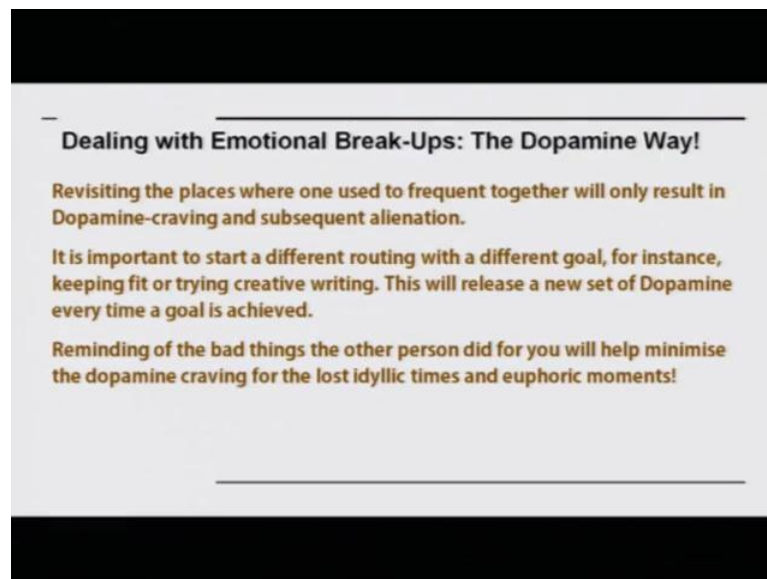
Now, how to deal with emotional breakups, the dopamine way how do we do that the mind treats an emotional break up as an uncompleted task as. So, many activities were planned with a particular partner till the end of one's life and career, buying a house both of them planned they even went and gave the money. They decided how they will pay the installments. Now, one of them decides to leave, take divorce now the remaining things falls entirely on the other person, the till the time the person is paying the installment and then trying to occupy the house even after occupying the house the feeling will be their only time this is something we planned together to complete and then it remains incomplete with the other persons contribution.

Now, that is the reason why it is difficult for many to come out of emotional break ups, but what could be the solution how are we going to deal with this how do we deal with this you seeing the dopamine. Now, the only solution is to give it a symbolic completion literally burning or burying any remnants.

For example, photographs that will induce the memory of the person; let us they that gave some promises or planning that was involved messages indicating this all the things if it could be burned. So, that the brain gets the feeling that the work has been complete now finishing has been given and the message of completion is going to the brain in the

patterning and then it decide that now I can move forward uninterruptedly and peacefully. In fact, it is also better not to go back to the same place. So, where the couple or the lovers frequented before, revisiting the places where one used to frequent together will only result in dopamine craving and subsequent alienation.

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So, you whenever the uninterrupted thoughts come to your mind, the brain is telling you like causing you the dopamine craving or go back to the place. Now, it will make you feel very happy, go back get a feeling get back your happy movements. So, you go there, but when you go there you realize that the person who share the happy movements is not the. So, what is happening? Subsequent withdrawal and alienation you then do not feel like talking to anybody because you get a feeling that without that particular person you can never be happy.

So, it is important to start a different routing with a different goals just completely reorient yourself have a different goal associate with a different person or with a different activity for instance during a depressive time you overate and then you completely being lot of weight and you start hating yourself particularly physically you do not want to see anybody socially because you feel that people will make fun of you. Now, one of the new goals could be keeping fit or trying creative writing, write poems make the very bad

movement poetically, render able beautiful movement and make the other people your audience empathizes with that movement.

So, that transformation can again make you sublimate and then complete all the uninterrupted activities which appear to be incomplete. So, this will also release a new set of dopamine every time a goal is achieved, every time you write a short story based on your experience, every time you write a poem, every time you do a painting or every time you just try to increase your fitness level. So, anything that you take up or you think that you learn a new language anything that you do when you try to finish it. So, dopamine will come to your rescue and it will and then it will make a feel good.

But reminding of the bad things the other person did for you will help minimize the dopamine craving for the lost idyllic times and euphoric moments. Now, keep this in mind and try in case of any kind of emotional break ups and towards conclusion I just want to conclude with this thought from Dalai Lama, he says that remember that sometimes not getting what you want is a wonderful stroke of luck.

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Now, all the time you are being thinking that you want something or you want the relationship of someone, some particular person and you think that you will be lucky if

you actually had this person in your life, but to the other hand dalai lama says that you need to remember that sometimes not getting what you want is a wonderful stroke of luck. You realize later in your life that if I had got that person my life would not moved a this way and I would not found this other person I would not have change my life in the other desirable way that I intended to happened.

Again just to recall another famous quote from Sigmund Freud he say that sometimes in retrospect, it is the bad times, the times of struggle he says that appears to be our most happiest once, but during the time when we were in struggle we were always thinking that it was such depressive movement, but when we come out of it and when we look at the struggle that behind he says that those times appear to be the happiest once think about these two thoughts and then just try to first handle any kind of emotional situations that is trying to cause you to go to addictive habits, stop that and then form a good habit change the rooting, change the patting and then try to rewire your brain and then restart a new life in which, let us say dopamine helps you to come out of it.

So, with this start I conclude this lecture and then I will continue with how you can develop new habits particularly the good ones and then more on this Zeigarnik Effect in the next lecture.

Thank you for watching this video.