

Is Safety More of a Priority Than Fun?

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AUTHOR BIO

Payson Dong was born in Hong Kong, raised in Shenzhen, and is now attending a boarding school. He found his voice through writing stories filled with fantastical experiences, and to date has built a portfolio with poems, essays, short stories, and a novel. Art has also become a voice for his emotions. He enjoys experimenting with colors and forms to create artworks, and merging art with technology such as Python and Midjourney. His interests are diverse including squash, coding, math, and Latin. These activities have shaped him into an individual full of love and inspiration.

ABSTRACT

The human desire for security has deep evolutionary roots, prioritizing safety over enjoyment. Early humans faced various threats and developed vigilance to survive. This tendency to prioritize security is evident in the negativity bias, where negative stimuli receive more attention than positive ones. Understanding this desire for safety helps us appreciate its importance in modern enjoyment. Safety is paramount when seeking pleasure. Neglecting safety protocols can turn enjoyable experiences into tragedies, as seen in drowning statistics. Ensuring safety in recreational activities enhances enjoyment and minimizes risks. Fear, stemming from the absence of security, hinders enjoyment. Crime rates and neighborhood safety affect individuals' well-being. Addressing safety concerns fosters relaxation and enjoyable experiences. Prioritizing safety fosters trust and security in communities, improving mental health and overall satisfaction. Safe environments enable social connections, fulfilling higher-level needs. Balancing thrill-seeking with safety is essential. While thrill-seekers report higher happiness levels, they engage in riskier behaviors. Finding a balance between excitement and safety is crucial.

Keywords: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, security, enjoyment, risk, crime rates, mental health, social connections, higher-level needs.

INTRODUCTION

Safety and fun are two essential components of the universal human experience. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, both aspects are significant contributors to fulfillment. Security, defined as a state of being free from danger, risk, or injury, is closely tied to the second tier of the hierarchy, representing our need for physical, emotional, and financial stability. Fun, on the other hand, encompasses the enjoyment and amusement we derive from various activities and experiences. As an individual progresses through the levels of Maslow's pyramid, the pursuit of enjoyable experiences can lead to a greater sense of belonging, self-esteem, and even self-actualization. When making decisions in our careers, hobbies, and lifestyle choices, however, it is vital to prioritize security over fun. A secure environment lays the foundation for pleasurable experiences, further enabling us to effectively satisfy our higher-level needs and achieve personal fulfillment.

The Origin of Safety

The desire for a secure environment has been ingrained in human beings long before their desire for enjoyable experiences. Evolutionary psychologists suggest that our ancestors prioritized security when navigating the dangers of their environment, as it was a crucial factor in our survival as a species (Buss, 2015). According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, safety is a fundamental human need that must be met before anyone can pursue higher-level needs such as social connections or self-actualization, which often involve seeking some form of enjoyment.

Early humans faced numerous threats, such as predators and natural disasters. In response to dangers, they developed a heightened sense of vigilance, allowing them to

better detect and avoid risks (Öhman & Mineka, 2001). This tendency to prioritize security over enjoyment is still evident today. Humans are more likely to respond excessively to negative or threatening stimuli than to positive or neutral ones, a tendency called the negativity bias (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). By understanding the evolutionary roots of our innate desire for safety, we can now better appreciate the importance of prioritizing security in humans' modern pursuit of enjoyment.

The Importance of a Secure Environment for Fun

When it comes to seeking pleasure, maintaining a secure environment should always be a priority. Pleasurable experiences can quickly turn into a tragedy when people do not follow basic safety protocols. According to the World Health Organization, drowning accounts for over 320,000 deaths every year, and the majority of these cases could be prevented with the enforcement of proper safety measures (WHO, 2021). Ensuring safety in recreational activities, such as swimming, can greatly reduce the risk of accidents and enhance overall enjoyment for all participants.

Here is another example: during my birthday party last year, I organized a boxing class for my friends and me. The boxing coaches prioritized our group's safety by providing us with adequate safety equipment and giving us clear instructions on how to avoid injuries during the class. Their attention to safety and overall care allowed us to fully enjoy the experience and create lasting memories without worrying about potential risks.

The Absence of Security Brings Fear and Hinders Fun

Fear is a powerful emotion that can prevent us from enjoying life to its fullest. When

a secure environment is absent, feelings of fear take over, making it impossible to have pleasurable experiences. The relationship between fear and the absence of safety is seen in crime rates and their impact on individuals' well-being. A study published in the Journal of Health and Social Behavior found that people who perceived their neighborhoods as unsafe, due to social disorder, reported higher levels of subjective alienation and distress (Ross & Mirowsky, 2009). Therefore, it is not an extreme claim to say that addressing safety concerns and creating secure environments would allow individuals to relax and engage in enjoyable experiences without fear.

Consider the following: during a trip with friends last October, we stayed at a camp on a mountain. One night, my friend asked me to venture outside the camp. However, I believed that we should not explore unfamiliar places without parental consent. Recognizing the potential risks associated with wandering off in an unknown area, especially at night, I erred on the side of caution. This decision kept us safe and reinforced the importance of considering safety first when seeking enjoyment or adventure.

Prioritizing Security Can Foster a Sense of Trust and Security

Prioritizing safety can foster a sense of trust and security within a community, contributing to overall well-being and allowing for more meaningful and fulfilling enjoyment. Safe environments provide a strong foundation for individuals to form social connections, which are essential for meeting higher-level needs in Maslow's Hierarchy, such as love and belonging. A study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that communities with higher levels of trust and social cohesion reported better mental health outcomes and overall life satisfaction (Ehsan et al., 2019). By

implementing safety precautions and fostering a secure environment, community members can feel at ease participating in different types of events and activities, allowing them to build stronger connections and experience greater enjoyment.

During a family vacation to the Maldives, we went snorkeling. The snorkeling center sent us detailed instructions on how to prevent dangers in the sea, including wearing life jackets, staying within designated areas, and following the buddy system. Their emphasis on safety fostered trust, allowing my family to fully enjoy the breathtaking underwater scenery without any fear or apprehension.

Thrills, Spills, and the Quest for Balance

Some people might argue that one should prioritize enjoyment instead of safety. One reason is that taking risks can be thrilling and exciting. Engaging in risky activities like bungee jumping, skydiving, or fast driving may lead to unnecessary casualties, but thrill-seekers may value the enjoyment above their potential dangers. While a study by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) found that thrill-seekers had higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction, it also revealed that they were more likely to engage in risky behaviors that could lead to severe injuries or death (Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000). Therefore, it is crucial to find a balance between seeking excitement and ensuring a secure environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, prioritizing safety over enjoyment is a crucial aspect of fulfilling human needs outlined in Maslow's Hierarchy. By focusing on creating a secure environment, we ensure that individuals can freely engage in enjoyable activities without worrying about potential hazards. Addressing safety protocols as

a priority not only eliminates the fear that inhibits our capacity for enjoyment but also emphasizes its foundational role in fostering well-being and personal growth. Moreover, prioritizing safety promotes trust within communities, laying the groundwork for higher levels of the hierarchy, such as love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization to be satisfied. Ultimately, placing safety at the forefront of decision-making enables us to maximize the pleasure and enrichment that enjoyable activities bring to our daily lives while also contributing to the overall quality of our shared experiences and human evolution.

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