

Regret



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Don't believe everything you think. People are not rational, especially when they are making important decisions. Daniel Kahneman, a psychologist, won a Nobel Prize in Economics for identifying a truckload of systematic errors people make when they rely on their intuition. People are more likely to refuse a bet if they are told they have a 30% chance of losing than if they are told they have a 70% chance of winning the same bet, they are afraid of terrorists who pose no statistical threat but not of

driving cars on the freeway, and statements that rhyme are more likely to be believed. The list of cognitive biases goes on and on. Salesmen, conmen, educators, artists, lovers and psychologists exploit them all the time.

People fear loss more than they value gain and they take extreme measures to avoid decisions they might regret, sacrificing opportunity in order not to be mistaken. Worse, we tend to evaluate loss relative to what we have at the moment and gain relative to what we hoped for when we started. This partly accounts for the difficulty many people have ending or fixing relationships, changing careers, adjusting portfolios, retiring or getting otherwise unstuck. The avoidance of suffering is more powerful than the pursuit of happiness, which is why my clients tend to show up when they are near rock bottom on some dimension of their lives. Their distress doesn't trouble me because I see it as a catalyst for change. Their presence in my office automatically shifts their focus from intuition to rational analysis, regardless of anything I might contribute. There is as much to be gained when you are happy as there is when you are miserable. Come see me now, whatever state you are in. Trust me. Call me.

Concise Personal Counseling

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