

The Gloat Factor

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Synopsis: Being aware of the intent to gloat and acceptance of the feeling whenever it surfaces, is one of the prerequisites in one's arduous journey towards detachment in a world that is full of sensory gratification.

When a celebrity or a famous person suffers indignation, why do million stay glued to the TV? Robert Smith in his book, 'The Joy of Pain', explores the gloating tendency in our psyche with 'Schadenfreude', the German word that conveys, 'joy' as 'schaden' and 'pain' as 'freude'.

One's tendency to enjoy watching someone experience a misfortune is gloating. The literature on sociology, also refers to social comparison — a process by which we keep comparing ourselves with others of a similar standing on various aspects like education, status, possessions, etc. The pressure on us to make our children accomplished in life, where material success is the 'be-all-end-all' may also trigger the gloat factor within us. The more familiar a person in terms of comparable standing, the more intense is likely to be one's gloating at the misfortune of the other, as explored by sociologists. Envy, a psychological trait, while on the one hand may improve one's performance, but on the other worsen one's tendency to gloat. According to Psychology Today, the result is the activation of a part of the brain that creates a flow of dopamine, a chemical responsible for pleasure. Anything that triggers dopamine gets addictive. ...

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