

Dangers of the psychological crutch

God belief and religion say that no matter how much you suffer if you believe in God then you will never endure it alone.

For many this is a coping mechanism. That is dangerous for life and reality is harsh and you don't want to risk blinding yourself to the truth for the sake of feeling better or safer.

For many they claim to find strength in God and religion because they want to appear braver than they actually are. That is dangerous too. You need to face the truth for the truth is not about you or concerned about you.

So if you think God is always by your side, then don't be consoled by that. Not feeling this god who is with you can be a torment in itself. Being accompanied does not necessarily mean it is of any benefit. This doctrine is a trick for it comforts you now not when it will count if you suffer in the future. If there is a God and you do not believe then you are still not really alone and you just think you are. But why do they want you to believe then? Belief is made too big of a deal. Its just a mask. It is trying to use belief to shield yourself from feeling alone but suffering does not care what you want or can stand so that shield is a bad one. The crutch is really a bait not a crutch. It is a serious thing if somebody is not telling you that.

People who say we should not try to undermine the faith of religion followers are actually accusing those followers of having a personality disorder (or worse!) which makes them need faith. If they really think that then why are they standing by while religion gets access to children in schools?

We need reason and evidence to be in proper control or to have the chance to be for truth does not care what we think or do or say and we need to accept truth. We are at risk if we do not. Concern for truth and human dignity are inseparable.

“The question of truth is as central to [religion’s] concern as it is in science. Religious belief can guide one in life or strengthen one at the approach of death, but unless it is actually true it can do neither of these things and so would amount to no more than an illusory exercise in comforting fantasy” Anglican priest and scientist John Polkinghorne.

It is obvious that parents bestow religious membership on their innocent children and concern for truth is the furthest thing from their minds. It is about the ceremony, the party, getting the child into a good religious school and the religious pretence. It is using religion as a crutch to get these things. A religious crutch is more than just the sick or damaged depending on faith or illusion to cope with life.

People talk about the meaning of life. By that phrase you would expect to mean being fully alive and feeling fully alive. A reason is a part of you and of life then reason has a role to play in allowing you to have meaning and giving you meaning. Without reason even a God is no good! If we were more rational and careful our lives would grow. If reason and so on say there is no God then we will get meaning by denying him. By caring about and following reason and evidence and thus ourselves we go on a path that might lead to God being abandoned as a superstition and a crutch. They are fundamentally non-religious tools.

Too often those who talk about the meaning of life want it at any cost and succumb to religion based fantasies and lies. They take on faith or a religion as a crutch.

It is no exaggeration to say that the reason there is so much need for fresh education on the subjects of religion, politics and spirituality is because people adopt and stick to nonsense beliefs just because they fill a real or perceived or imagined need. Those beliefs are psychological crutches. Too many crutches are still held on to when they have passed their use. Too many crutches are about filling a need that is only imagined. That is why we must not let ourselves be pressured by society which seems to applaud the crutches.

When we say a person is in denial we are saying they are in denial or distracting themselves from something that is not only painful but threatening. They are refusing to face up to their vulnerabilities whether real or perceived. When pain is in the past you need fear it no more for it is in the past. That does not mean you will not fear it. You will fear for the future. Even present pain is tolerable when you realise it will pass. It is the future that is the problem. Fear of a future of pain is itself traumatising in addition to whatever pain that is causing the problem.

It is clear that to be in denial is never good. If a person is better off being in denial then that is down to luck and nothing else. It is luck not the crutch though the crutch gets the credit.

If your fears are not too bad then a mild crutch or mild disconnection from how bad you feel and the treats that loom is

okay but it cannot be encouraged. It is still being maladaptive. Everybody is always in some danger so you need your eyes peeled even if it hurts. It is better than the alternative.

Prayer, daydreaming, watching a film, getting drunk and mindfulness are all ways in which we can ignore how we feel simply being distracting ourselves from our troubles.

Really powerful crutches are very uncommon. It is one in a thousand probably who can react to the news that they have an agonising terminal cancer by becoming super-religious. Crutches generally speaking are overrated.

We all have psychological crutches and it is natural to use them. Even the body creates crutches as the feeling of wellbeing you get after eating salad. Endorphin helps us feel better than we should. It is a crutch provided by nature. This is not really a psychological crutch though and makes no case for having one.

Not all crutches are like drugs though any crutch can turn into something like an addiction. For example, you get a buzz from shopping and it makes you feel so great that soon your spending is out of control and you won't stop. The shopping becomes a compulsion for it helps you be more escapist.

Some argue that crutches must only be a temporary measure. But others think lifelong crutches such as the thought you are going to Heaven when you die are good for you. People feel a crutch you can lean on long-term is a good one. But surely a crutch that tells you you are doing good for others and making Heaven on earth for them as much as possible is a better one? It is less insular.

Do crutches always produce an integrity problem? Are there examples of crutches that maintain integrity? Say you are in a corrupt political party. You tell yourself you can change it though that is not a very credible perspective. That motivates you to take action. You are using a crutch to deal with a lack of integrity. But that does not change the fact that you are trying to feel a lie is true or that you can do better than you can in order to fix an integrity problem. You are prone to being sucked into the lies when you are lying to yourself.

If you have to make excuses for why something evil is good or for why something good is evil then you damage your reality detectors and thus take a stand against justice. Some say the answer is not to stop trying to rationalise and excuse things but to use this ability to help yourself to help others and not to hurt. Here is an example. Somebody has been diagnosed with a terminal illness. Help them feel they can get better even though they will not. But that risks hurting them - false security disappoints and hurts. And lying to this person is not going to help you help the next person who comes along in a similar state for they will see you as a fake. It is too easy to support somebody's crutch that will hurt them and deny that you intended to hurt them. Sometimes a crutch helps and hurts both at the one time.

Not all crutches seem to be attempts to cheat and get life easier. Any crutch that is not a natural one like endorphin would definitely count as cheating. It does not matter if everybody cheats – it is still cheating.

A crutch can appear when you are not actively ignoring something but something is not getting your attention for you cannot notice everything.

If good crutches can exist then it is no easy matter to distinguish these from bad ones. Intuition and observation only help a bit.

A clue is if a crutch is being developed but has to break then it is a bad one.

Another clue is that it can make your life worse so it is bad. For example, feeling that for you eating loads of fat every day will prolong your life.

Using invalid arguments to convince people of things might habituate them to bad reasoning habits in general. It would be surprising if it did not. And its a kind of seduction and dishonest and is pure manipulation. Its bad medicine even if it cures something. And the cure may not really be down to the medicine.

The last clue is that effort to better your life must continue whether because of the crutch or even in spite of it. The best way is to better your life regardless of what the crutch says. You can have a crutch and not use it.