

I think, therefore I am ... not following anymore

To follow, or not to follow: that becomes the question

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"To put more time in your life, don't rush. Slow down instead". Ernie Zelinski

« We are spending so much of our precious time earning in order to spend that we don't have the time to examine our priorities. » Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin

"Our values come consciously from our understanding - or unconsciously from our conditioning ... When we become conscious of motivations that were previously unconscious, we can awaken ourselves to what we really want and to what are our options." Marilyn Ferguson

"You have watches, we have time." Cambodian proverb

Few people can claim to truly "live their lives," or, in other words: for most people, a large part of their activities and their commitments are not the fruit of their real choices. In many situations we are in automatic mode, and the events are the ones that bring us to make choices that, if we were taking the time to settle, we simply wouldn't do, or otherwise. Most of the time we do not really decide what happens to us, for, it is proposed by others who have chosen for us. And either we accept, or we run away, or we fight, in response to what occurs without being ourselves the initiator of it. And few are the events that we plan, prepare, realize and live in real conscience.

It is not so much that we don't make any choices, but these are often dependent on chance, on our conditioning and habits, or on other persons, and they rarely come really from ourselves, from our desires, our intuition, our feelings, from our common sense or from our reflection. Our choices mostly remain preconditioned, we make many fast-decisions, without even waiting to sleep on it.

Technological developments, and the consumer society with its share of advertising and manipulation, as well as the mass media, have an important role in this way of living.

In this context, our life is more like a race against time, where we follow the program and where our goal is not to miss walking, or even to gain ground on the neighbor to be the first to reach the top of the stairs, without knowing what is in fact at the upper floor, except the next day, the next weekend, the next holidays, the next promotion, the time when children are grown, the retirement age,

Within the framework of consumption we are in a headlong rush that degrowth called "rebound effect". It is the consumption itself that stimulates this escalation. Indeed, consuming stimulates to use what we consume, and to consume more to use it. Enjoying the technological advantages stimulates to increase our use of technology itself.

For example, a handwritten letter or a mechanically typed one is a priori unique. In case of error it is manually corrected if necessary, and simply sent to the recipient with perhaps a carbon copy archived. By cons, with the computer, laser printer and photocopier, that same letter is ten times modified and printed, for spelling, but more often for other changes (rarely major), without taking into account further copies used for multiple archives and to send copies to various recipients "for information". This way, we use ten to twenty times more paper, more electricity, more ink (both as for the printer as for the copier), and it's equally valid for the working time of the secretary and the redactor, as well as for the manufacture of devices, for the programs and equipment maintenance, the work of the computer technicians, or training to be able to use these tools. Gradually, as facilities are developed (mainly through the development of technologies), we are led to consume more and exponentially at all levels.

Another example : travel. The better it is to travel - cheap, easy, quick - the more we are led to travel - more often, further and for shorter periods.

On the other hand, the more we buy, the more we accumulate consumer goods. But all these

possessions, have to be stored (having cupboards, moving to a larger house), cleaned, maintained, used. We must also remember what we possess and where we stored it. The more we possess, the more we need to use our memory resources to know the place of these objects. The more these objects are sophisticated, the more we need also to remember how to use them (especially if we do not use them often).

When we get the habit to use all that; our possessions eventually become to us essential, and we become addicted to the point that they are possessing us. And when one of them has a breakdown, or is worn out, then we have the concern of having to replace it, repair it, find a suitable spare part etc.

On the other hand, the more we possess appliances and gadgets to make life easier and make us "save time", the more we take the opportunity to fill our leisure time earned, by new activities: trainings, sports, outings, holidays, etc. And therefore we have less real plenty of time, our agenda is more than full, we stress more, and we live in a hurry.

The mobile phone, in this regard, has increased this phenomenon blatantly: anybody can reach us anywhere. Not only do we find time for ourselves, but we must remain available for others, everywhere and at all times.

And finally, we spend our time to buy, eat, work, sleep, use, clean, maintain, store our acquisitions; running between the appointments of our diary And we don't have time to breathe, nor the time to think, nor the time to make choices, nor the time to do questioning, nor the time to make realizations and even less time to evolve or to love really, other than through gifts or avoided conflicts.

As our life has become a race, we are at the point of being caught in the vicious circle of not having even the time to choose to organize ourselves differently. The decisions we make are not the result of our choices, they appear to us as ineluctable. And often we are frustrated not being able to do all the things we would like to do.

We can no longer discern the priorities of less important actions, and often, we do what is important at the last minute, after what is less important (see the tale about this: <http://sechangerso.be/EN/5EN-Tales/StonesPebblesSand.htm>).

Finally, we live many lifetimes in one, but often without that the pilot is actually at the controls.

For some too, stop running can seem dangerous. Indeed, as long as we stay in a frenetic activity that prevents us from thinking, it protects ourselves to question ourselves and to realize that we don't live at all the life we had dreamed of living when we were 20. There are then the shocks of life (death, divorce, job loss, illness, etc.) that for some, give the opportunity to offer this questioning. And sometimes, we can not do without a depression, when the unconscious is forcing us, in suffering and incomprehension, to restore the balance between our needs and authentic desires, and the reality of life choices we made.

Pride aside, who among us can claim to live completely outside of this scheme? The description is a caricature, of course, but everyone can recognize some aspects that he indeed lives every day.

And often, nothing leads us to put this into question, to disrupt our beliefs and habits.

And persevering in this mode, where individual thought has no place, we are more inclined to take the thoughts of others as true (and that's where we see all the importance of the influence of television and other mass media).

For, our opinions are seldom related to our experience, to our own thinking, but are modeled on opinions outside of us, that we have adopted (often without evidence, just because they were presented to us as reliable or because they are not contrary to opinions previously acquired, in the same way).

Our critical potential loses its acuteness without realizing it. And therefore, we are ready to conform with the ready-to-think: from people around us, from the media, from the advertising.

In our countries (Western Europe) 98% of the population owns a TV at home, and the average daily

hours spent watching television is now approaching four hours.

The more we live at full capacity in the system of consumption, ease, technology, the more we become malleable to what precisely this society has to offer to us : vicious circle.

And yet it's possible to give up some activities. It's possible to give up, not only the habit to accumulate possessions, but also to get rid of what we already have. We can consciously limit our use of the benefits of technology. We can set our priorities and choose to let go what is less important, and find back some time, among others, the time to think.

But more than just finding the time to think, it is more to find the time to be, to listen to oneself, to feel, to live our life to the fullest, every moment, with the presence of our consciousness, rather than to live in the dark, in a race to meet targets or illusions of the future that we will not necessarily reach, or that we won't even notice we have reached them, already absorbed by the next goal to achieve or a problem to eliminate.

The ability to find the time to think, to find the time to live, is an approach that requires a learning time. This learning begins with our commitment to stop as often as possible, to breathe in the moment, just observing what is, releasing the accelerator pedal of our actions, to better come back to ourselves to better come back to the World and to come back to life.

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site : <http://sechangersoi.be/EN/EN-home.htm>

page : <http://sechangersoi.be/EN/4EN-Articles/I%20think.htm>

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