

Dad,

Anhedonia correctly describes my experience. I feel no genuine pleasure from any normal activity - food, entertainment, social interactions, etc. At best they distract/amuse me temporarily, but generally they bore me or I find some way to become upset by them (examples: feeling guilty and ashamed about stuffing my face, getting angry at music videos, being disappointed by other people or feeling inferior and incompetent compared to them). I only get a weak 'stimulus' sort of feeling from these activities, but it is not particularly pleasant or desirable and certainly does not motivate me to continue living. I have felt this way ever since I was 14; it has never changed, not even temporarily. My only motivations in life were intellectual and artistic achievement/stimulation (as I explained to you when I was 14), but even those never made me feel 'good' or 'happy', and now have completely ceased to be rewarding to me at all.

Living in my fantasies was necessary (and still is) because I have never wanted to live in the real world. It is a wasteland, depressing, horrible, and stupid. There is nothing good, beautiful, or intelligent within it, at least not that I have ever personally witnessed or interacted with. I created my fantasies to satisfy my emotional, social, and aesthetic needs, because the real world has never satisfied them, nor has it even offered the possibility of doing so.

You are correct that living in my fantasies (and others' fantasies - music, art, video games) was a prolonged childhood, a means of avoiding reality. That childhood seems to have ended during my senior year when I realized that my fantasies, and other peoples' fantasies, are only creations of human minds, and can never compensate for the absence of a rich and fulfilling life in the real Cosmos, because Nature is far more ingenious and brilliant than a human could ever be. A rich and fulfilling life is what I need, but I cannot have it because of the deranged state of humanity and because of my disability. I need to find some kind of basic satisfaction or enjoyment in life immediately, because I am currently so profoundly unhappy and hopeless that I am mentally incapable of expending my efforts on anything that will not directly remedy my dissatisfaction. I cannot slave away trying to save the world in the hope that someday, decades from now, I might find some kind of happiness somewhere (which I probably won't anyways).

I have no motivation to help other humans because I cannot imagine what they could possibly offer me that would make my life worth living. I have never received any happiness or satisfaction from my interactions with other people. Therefore, I will not find any motivation from trying to engage with my professors or solve humanity's problems - even if I was capable of doing so, it would only sap my time and energy while I became increasingly unhappy and unsatisfied, which is an unsustainable situation.

Remember, engaging with academics to change their ways and solve the physics problem was exactly what I was doing when/before I became much sicker during my senior year. In fact, I was much more involved in it than ever before: having talks with Heppelmann, Smolin, and various other professors, writing the flowing space GPS simulation, writing my GRFP applications, thinking about graduate school, etc. So that is definitely not the solution. If anything, it seemed to trigger my depression and loss of motivation. I think this is because it forced me to start immersing myself in the real world (instead of my fantasy world) and becoming an adult, but I realized this life would not satisfy my needs and might even prevent me from doing so, especially considering my severely inadequate energy.

The only exceptions to my disdain for all other humans are you and Eva, but I think my mind doesn't fully see you as being part of humanity at large, because you've been present throughout my entire life. You two just aren't enough for me somehow, even though you're the only good things in my life.

The real world has ever brought me any genuine motivation or desire to live as a human being, and I can't imagine that it ever will, no matter what I do.

Thank you as always for trying to help me and be patient with me even though I am a source of never-ending problems, trouble, and whining.

Valerie