



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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# How Much Do We Need – What is the Limitation of Wants and Where Do We End Up with Unfulfilled Desires?



Bhandari Medani Prasad <sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Akamai University, USA

<sup>2</sup> Gandaki University, Nepal

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#### Background and Aim of Study:

#### Abstract

The paper considers the significance of recognizing the limitations of our wants and the consequences of unfulfilled desires. It should be emphasized that an unchecked pursuit of endless wants leads to unhappiness, unhealthiness, and selfishness, ultimately contributing to social disorder. In a society driven by consumerism and materialism, individuals often find themselves trapped in an endless cycle of desires and wants. However, understanding the limitations of these wants is crucial for personal well-being and social harmony.

When our desires become insatiable and unattainable, we experience a constant sense of dissatisfaction and unhappiness. The relentless pursuit of material possessions and external validation results in a shallow and unfulfilled existence. The relentless pursuit of personal desires often leads to neglecting our physical and mental well-being. Unhealthy habits and lifestyle choices emerge as we prioritize immediate gratification over long-term health and happiness.

The selfish nature of unfulfilled desires manifests as individuals prioritize their own needs and wants above the well-being of others. This self-centeredness erodes empathy, cooperation, and social cohesion, ultimately contributing to social disorder and unrest. Recognizing the limitations of our wants and cultivating contentment and gratitude is vital for personal fulfillment and social harmony. By embracing a mindset of sufficiency and focusing on meaningful connections and experiences, individuals can break free from the cycle of unfulfilled desires. This shift in perspective promotes personal happiness, healthier lifestyles, and the cultivation of a more compassionate and inclusive society.

#### Conclusions:

Understanding the limitations of our wants and recognizing the consequences of unfulfilled desires is crucial for personal and societal well-being. By striving for contentment, practicing gratitude, and prioritizing genuine connections over material possessions, we can foster a more balanced and harmonious society, free from the unhappiness, unhealthiness, and selfishness that arise from unchecked desires.

#### Keywords:

limitation of wants, unfulfilled desires, social harmony, insatiable, unattainable, unhealthy habits, immediate gratification

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#### Information about the author:

**Bhandari Medani Prasad** – <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2213-2349>; [medani.bhandari@gmail.com](mailto:medani.bhandari@gmail.com); Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, Professor, Senior Vice President, Akamai University, Hawaii, USA; Advisor, Gandaki University, Pokhara, Nepal.



### Dear Editor,

Our wants and desires are unlimited, non-archival, and have no boundaries. Understanding wants and unlimited desires is a complex one that has been explored by philosophers and economists for centuries. At its core, I argue that human wants are unlimited, while the resources available to satisfy those wants are limited. This creates a fundamental tension in human society, as we are constantly striving to satisfy our desires, but we are never able to do so completely.

Unlimited desires revolve around the nature of human desires and the implications they have on our lives. It raises questions about the extent of our needs, the limitations of our wants, and the consequences of unfulfilled desires. Human wants are inherent aspects of our nature, encompassing various material, emotional, and social desires. These wants arise from our innate needs for survival, comfort, security, and fulfillment. However, the challenge arises when our wants extend beyond what is necessary for our well-being and become insatiable or limitless.

While it is important to acknowledge and address our genuine needs, unlimited desires refer to the relentless pursuit of wants without considering their practicality, sustainability, or impact on ourselves and others. In my opinion, one often exceeds what is reasonable or necessary for a fulfilling life.

Understanding the limitations of our wants is a critical aspect of personal growth and contentment. It involves recognizing the difference between needs and wants, evaluating the true value and significance of our desires, and discerning the long-term consequences of pursuing them without moderation. Unfulfilled desires can lead to a perpetual sense of dissatisfaction and restlessness. When we constantly chase after wants that are beyond our reach or inherently unattainable, we may find ourselves caught in a cycle of striving, discontent, and disappointment. This can negatively impact our overall well-being, relationships, and sense of fulfillment.

***To remain happy, it is important to accept limitations.*** Recognizing and accepting the limitations of our wants can bring a sense of clarity and freedom. It allows us to prioritize our genuine needs, focus on meaningful experiences and relationships, and cultivate contentment within ourselves. By developing a mindful approach to desires and embracing a sense of sufficiency, we can find a balance between pursuing our aspirations and appreciating the present moment. Understanding the root of wants and desires prompts us to reflect on our motivations, priorities, and the potential consequences of our actions. By cultivating self-awareness, practicing moderation, and embracing gratitude, we can navigate the complexities of desires and lead a more fulfilling and balanced life.

***Defining wants.*** There are several different ways to define wants and desires. Some scholars define wants as those things that we need to survive, while others define them as those things that we simply want, but do not need (Dierksmeier, 2014). Still, others define wants as a combination of both needs and desires. The limitation of wants is a matter of debate. Some of us argue that there

is no limit to human wants, while others argue that there are certain basic needs that all humans have and that these needs can be satisfied (Desmarais-Tremblay, 2017). When our wants are unfulfilled, we can experience several negative emotions, such as frustration, anger, and anxiety. We may also become materialistic, constantly striving to acquire more and more possessions in an attempt to satisfy our desires. In some cases, unfulfilled wants can lead to destructive behavior, such as addiction or crime.

There are several different ways to deal with unfulfilled wants. Some people try to suppress their desires, while others try to find ways to satisfy them healthily. Some people also find that it is helpful to focus on the things that they do have, rather than the things that they do not have.

Our wants are shaped by our culture, our upbringing, and our individual experiences.

Our wants are influenced by various factors such as culture, upbringing, and personal experiences. These influences shape our desires and play a significant role in determining what we perceive as necessary or valuable. However, it is crucial to recognize that we have the power to shape and control our wants, rather than being solely driven by external forces.

Curbing our wants can be a transformative practice that allows us to find inner peace and contribute to fostering peace in our interactions with others. By consciously examining our desires and questioning their true significance, we can separate genuine needs from superficial wants. This introspective process helps us develop a sense of discernment and prioritize what truly aligns with our values and well-being.

By cultivating contentment and embracing a mindset of sufficiency, we can find peace within ourselves. This involves appreciating the present moment, expressing gratitude for what we have, and recognizing that fulfillment does not solely rely on external acquisitions. It is about finding joy in the simple pleasures of life and nurturing meaningful connections with others. When we can curb our wants and find peace within ourselves, we are better equipped to help others and contribute to fostering peace in our communities. By shifting our focus from individualistic pursuits to collective well-being, we can extend compassion, empathy, and support to those around us. Through acts of kindness, understanding, and cooperation, we contribute to creating a harmonious and peaceful environment for everyone (Bhandari, 2023b).

Curbing our wants is a transformative process that involves questioning and shaping our desires in alignment with our values. By finding inner peace and contentment, we can extend that energy to others, fostering peace in our interactions and relationships. Through conscious choices, gratitude, and acts of compassion, we can contribute to a more peaceful world (Bhandari, 2023a):

- Our wants can be both positive and negative. They can motivate us to achieve great things, but they can also lead us to make poor decisions.



- It is important to be aware of our wants and to manage them healthily.

- We should not let our wants control us. We should instead focus on living a life that is meaningful and fulfilling.

**Desires, wants and dissatisfaction are very complex processes.** Desires, want, and dissatisfaction is a complex process influenced by various psychological, social, and cultural factors. Understanding this complexity requires delving into several key aspects:

**1. Formation of desires:** Desires can emerge from a variety of sources, including innate biological needs, social conditioning, personal experiences, and cultural influences. Our desires are shaped by the values, beliefs, and expectations ingrained in us through upbringing and societal norms.

**2. Subjectivity of wants:** Wants are subjective and vary from person to person. What one individual desires may differ from another based on their unique perspectives, personalities, and life experiences. This subjectivity adds to the complexity of understanding desires and their fulfillment.

**3. Hedonic treadmill:** The phenomenon known as the "hedonic treadmill" (Brickman & Campbell, 1971) suggests that humans tend to adapt quickly to new circumstances and experiences. As a result, even when desires are fulfilled, the initial happiness and satisfaction may fade, leading to new desires and an ongoing cycle of seeking more to maintain a sense of fulfillment (Rosenbloom, 2010, August 7).

The hedonic treadmill, also known as hedonic adaptation, is a psychological phenomenon that refers to the tendency of individuals to return to a relatively stable level of happiness or well-being after experiencing positive or negative life events. It suggests that despite changes in circumstances or material possessions, people's happiness levels tend to revert to a baseline or set point.

According to the hedonic treadmill theory, individuals initially experience a boost in happiness when they achieve or acquire something they desire, such as a promotion, a new possession, or a positive life event. However, over time, this initial increase in happiness diminishes, and individuals adapt to their new circumstances. As a result, they require even more positive events or acquisitions to maintain the same level of happiness.

The concept of the hedonic treadmill is rooted in the idea that humans have a remarkable capacity to adjust to changing circumstances, both positive and negative, and return to their baseline level of happiness. This adaptation can occur relatively quickly, which may explain why the initial excitement or satisfaction derived from achieving a desire tends to fade over time.

The hedonic treadmill has implications for our understanding of happiness and well-being. It suggests that the pursuit of material possessions or external achievements alone may not lead to long-term happiness. Instead, it highlights the importance of focusing on internal factors, personal growth and cultivating a positive mindset to sustain well-being.

By recognizing the hedonic treadmill, individuals can become more mindful of their desires and aspirations. They can strive to find happiness in experiences, relationships, personal development, and meaningful connections rather than relying solely on external factors that may provide temporary satisfaction.

The Hedonic treadmill encourages individuals to seek a more balanced and sustainable approach to happiness, one that acknowledges the transience of external desires and focuses on cultivating inner contentment and well-being.

**4. Social comparison:** Social comparison plays a significant role in the psychology of desires, which can lead to negative emotions such as envy, jealousy, and discontentment. We often evaluate our desires and satisfaction based on how we perceive others' possessions, achievements, or lifestyles. This comparison can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction if we believe our desires are not met in comparison to others.

When we compare ourselves to others, particularly in terms of possessions, achievements, or social status, we often overlook or devalue what we already have. This tendency to focus on what we lack rather than appreciating our circumstances can generate feelings of inadequacy and fuel an unending cycle of desires and dissatisfaction.

Finding peace and contentment requires a shift in mindset and a conscious effort to let go of the habit of comparison. It involves cultivating a sense of gratitude for what we have and embracing the idea that our worth and happiness are not defined by external markers or comparisons with others.

Understanding our motives and choices is crucial in determining how much we truly need and setting limitations on our wants. By reflecting on our values, priorities, and genuine needs, we can develop a clearer understanding of what brings true fulfillment to our lives. It is important to distinguish between genuine needs and desires fueled by external influences or societal pressures.

Choosing to be happy and satisfied with what we have, while also striving for personal growth and improvement, can lead to a more peaceful and contented life. We focusing on our progress and setting goals that align with our values, we can free ourselves from the constant cycle of comparison and find fulfillment in our unique journey. Finding peace and contentment requires a shift in mindset, letting go of comparison, embracing gratitude, and focusing on our personal growth and happiness without being overly influenced by external standards.

It is a continuous process that requires self-reflection, self-acceptance, and an appreciation for the present moment.

**5. Impact of advertising and consumer culture:** Advertising and consumer culture heavily influence our desires by promoting certain products, lifestyles, and ideals. These external influences shape our perceptions of what is desirable and can contribute to a perpetual sense of dissatisfaction as we constantly strive to attain the advertised standards of happiness and success.



**6. Psychological needs:** Our desires are often connected to deeper psychological needs, such as the need for belonging, autonomy, competence, and self-actualization. Unfulfilled psychological needs can lead to a sense of dissatisfaction, prompting us to seek fulfillment through various wants and desires.

**7. Mindfulness and contentment:** Developing mindfulness and cultivating contentment can help navigate the complexity of desires and dissatisfaction. Mindfulness practices enable us to observe our desires without judgment, understand their transient nature, and develop a sense of contentment by appreciating the present moment and cultivating gratitude.

I think desires, wants, and dissatisfaction are a multifaceted process influenced by a range of psychological, social, and cultural factors. Recognizing the complexity of this process allows us to develop a deeper understanding of our desires and work towards finding a sense of contentment and fulfillment in our lives.

### Conclusions

The question of how much we need, and the limitations of our wants is a complex and deeply personal one. Our wants, influenced by various factors such as culture, society, and personal experiences, can shape our desires and aspirations. While wants can serve as motivators for personal growth and achievement, they can also lead us astray if driven by external pressures or misguided values. It is important to recognize that unfulfilled desires can have both positive and negative consequences. On one hand, they can inspire us to strive for more, push our boundaries, and achieve great things. On the other hand, unchecked desires can result in a perpetual cycle of dissatisfaction, comparison, and a constant yearning for more without finding true contentment.

Finding a balance between our wants and needs is crucial. This involves introspection, self-awareness, and aligning our desires with our values and long-term well-being. It requires us to differentiate between genuine needs and superficial wants and to cultivate gratitude for what we already have.

Understanding our motives and choices is essential in determining the extent of our wants and setting meaningful limitations. By focusing on personal growth, pursuing goals that align with our values, and being mindful of the potential consequences of unfulfilled desires, we can strive for a more fulfilling and contented life. Ultimately, finding contentment lies in the ability to appreciate and be grateful for the present moment, while

also working towards personal growth and improvement. It is a journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance, where we learn to find peace and fulfillment within ourselves rather than constantly comparing ourselves to others or seeking external validation. By recognizing the limitations of our wants, embracing gratitude, and aligning our desires with our authentic selves, we can navigate the complexities of unfulfilled desires and find a path that leads to genuine contentment and a sense of inner peace.

### Ethical Approval

The study protocol was consistent with the ethical guidelines of the 1975 Declaration of Helsinki as reflected in a prior approval by the Institution's Human Research Committee.

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