

Project Group (Number and Name): 53 - It is the emotions, stupid! How the access to our emotions can solve all our problems

Comment

Authors of the Comment: Lea Schulz, Merle Hartmaring, Jannik Brügge, Helena Körber, Charlotte Hoppe, Merit Faltin, Kenneth Lühmann, Rosa Luckow, Hannes Hamester, Mira Stajkoski, Sofia-Marie Lahse, Fiona Meissner, Ronja Stepbach

Comment: Sustainability - a challenge of loving oneself?

We all have basic human needs. Searching for their fulfillment leads to consumption. If hunger and longing for safety are accomplished, but we still feel a lack of attachment, what do we do to satisfy it?

To solve our current climate crisis we need to teach society the skill of loving ourselves and others. This is a daunting and hard task that takes time and can hardly be measured. This critical comment will discuss some of the obstacles we need to overcome and will critically analyze the following thesis published by Jorge Guerra González in 2013.

Up till now we have been longing for short term happiness and acknowledgement by consuming material goods and striving for individual status symbols, but those cannot fill the void in us that needs love.

According to the author, as soon as everyone is content with themselves, they will also be content with what they have and own, or even less, resulting in the end of unsustainable consumerism. Rather than changing the system and thus forcing people to change their behavior but not their mindset, the contribution of each individual leads to a long lasting sustainable community.

Regarding this topic, we encounter many challenges when trying to apply the theory into our daily lives. *Are we even able to change society as a whole when this exact change depends solely on the individual?*

Everyone is part of the system, therefore everyone needs to change in order for the system to change. Therefore, to achieve a constructive change in people's mindsets belonging to all kinds of socioeconomic “bubbles”, there is a definite need to overcome barriers through exchange. Only by facing different opinions and perspectives in conversation, there is a chance to expand our horizons. To change the mindset of those who want to stay isolated and breach the barriers that complicate accessibility and connection, one can only participate in open discourse, stay open-minded and try to overcome internalized dogmatism. Written communication for example in social media is especially difficult considering the potential for misunderstandings. *How can we reach different people on a deep inner level?*

Another challenge lies in the lack of methods to measure happiness, self-love and affection as well as the corresponding sustainable development. By not being able to measure these factors and their impact on creating a more sustainable world, we also do not know whether possible solutions are effective. Measurability is essential for scientific work and provides the continuing basis for research. *Which factors or emotions are suitable to measure the path to long term happiness? Or is it possible to approach this in a non-scientific way?*

The challenges lie within the implementation. The idea of changing the world through self-love is inspiring and exhilarating. However, due to challenging ways of measuring the effect, the concept of bubbles of differing opinions and possible miscommunication, one can only ask the question whether this thesis can be the solution to create a sustainable world for society nowadays and in the future. *After all, can we change the world solely with self-love?*