

The moderate man

The ninth chapter of the Tao Te Ching provides us with some exquisite wisdom based on the simple reasoning of cause and effect. This chapter tells us why you shouldn't force things or show off your achievements too much because doing so will get you in trouble. We are living in an age of extremes: it's all about bigger, better, taller, stronger, faster. Moderation is looked down upon. Moderation is for the ordinary. It's boring and therefore not special. Many women, for example, are not attracted to moderation; they want to be associated with the extreme, special things. Needless to say: the majority of women nowadays seem to chase the top percentage of men. A man who is part of the upper layer can be considered an 'exception' and, thus, a non-moderate man. Because female nature seems to work this way, we see that many men bring themselves to the extreme to get female validation. They try to become filthy rich, no matter how damaging for themselves and their environment this might be. Or they engage in excessive drinking and clubbing, or any other way of forcing themselves to the top of *some* dominance hierarchy. We

see this on other levels as well: regular working class men working sixty- to eighty-hour work weeks on the plantation so they can pay off that mortgage and reach the minimum quota of three vacations a year, while their wives are unhappily forced to work a dead-end office job (getting screwed by Tyrone in their cubicles when working late). Hence, filling your cup to the brim is not good. It's stressful and unhealthy. Yet, many men are inclined to do so. Why?

Men might behave this way because of societal expectations. They are very much aware of the fact that women are the mate selectors and that they have to work to be with one. Women come with a price tag; whether you like it or not. Men are so desperate to make themselves desirable mates that they are willing to make great sacrifices for it. Another factor that comes into play is that men are naturally inhibited to climb dominance hierarchies – to slay dragons. All great, however: pursuing extremes can lead to psychological problems, exhaustion, depression and even death. The greatest dragon slayer of them all has always the most enemies; either the dragons he slays or the men that want to replace him. It is probably wiser to keep away from that position because it might cost you your life.

The things that you're missing out on are fame, respect and women. But hey. Do you truly need these factors in your life? Yes, these can be assets at first sight, but when we look closer they come with great liability.

An example. Fame will bring you haters, annoying groupies that restrict your movement, people that want to take advantage of you, people that envy you and people that use you for their own benefit. Fame makes you a target for crime, because with fame usually comes money. Also, you have to watch your mouth and be very careful in your actions, because everything you say or do will be magnified by media exposure. Also, respect comes with responsibility and, possibly, responsibility that you do not wish to have. If you are known to be very wise, for example, hordes of people will come to you asking for advice up to the point that you are simply unable to help them all. Let alone that it's exhausting as hell. And what about women? Many men dream about having their harem of beautiful females, but, to be honest, I think this will be utterly exhausting as well. It will cost you a lot of money too. If you're in a position of great wealth, then false accusations of domestic violence can lead to divorce and you getting a bad reputation (or even jail-time) and losing your

money. If you're famous, your popularity and position or job can be destroyed by a false rape accusation. It's not worth it. Your infatuation will eventually be your downfall.

Society presents us a great many external things that suppose to make us happy when we obtain them. The funny thing though, is that we have no control over externals. It might be great to have things like riches, women and respect, but you can lose them in a heartbeat. The path of acquiring externals is not a reliable path to follow because your happiness will depend on things that, at the end of the day, are not up to you. Most people do not realize that society *wants* us to be on the hamster wheel because many people profit from that. Clothing brands, dating coaches, television programs, employers and social media sell you that dream of getting the goodies at the top. At the same time they sell you the nightmare of what happens if you don't: you will be a loser and a nobody and no one will like you. Ask yourself: is there any profit to make from minimalism, 'being a good person' or 'consuming less instead of more'? The consumerist plantation will collapse if people collectively decide to consume only what they need. Because people keep consuming they

keep giving away their power to the system. The needier you are for what the plantation has to offer the more of a slave you'll be.

The other extreme is called asceticism. Many centuries ago a prince called Siddhartha Gautama was surrounded by the most beautiful women, ate the best food and had access to any pleasure that the kingdom had to offer. In spite of his great wealth he was chronically dissatisfied. He decided to leave the palace to explore the outside world for the first time in his life. On his journey he encountered poverty, disease and a corpse. This shocked him. He had now discovered what his father had shielded him from: *the reality of suffering*. He spent the next years finding a way to end suffering and became enlightened. Prince Siddhartha Gautama is also known as *the Buddha*. Before he reached enlightenment he went through a long period of doing the complete opposite of what he had done before. Instead of indulging he abstained. Instead of seeking pleasure he sought pain. He exposed himself to physical torture and starved himself until he was on the brink of death. But this didn't enlighten him. The Buddha found out that living in extremes will not bring happiness.

How about moderation? What about being

ordinary? I think moderation is a key ingredient in living a happy life. It's the golden path between asceticism and indulgence. Both of these extremes are bad for your health and overall wellbeing. Buddhists call this path the 'Middle Way'. The Middle Way means finding the sweet spot in whatever you do; not becoming too passive (being in a state of 'sloth') but not hyperactive either. You're not starving yourself and you're not filling yourself up to the brim. I think that the moderate man and MGTOW are very much alike. Becoming a moderate man starts by walking away from a society that tells you not to.