

Being average is PERFECTLY FINE

ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA

Nowadays, the word “average” is only wanted if it’s in mathematics. For individuals, being average is considered synonymous with being unremarkable, giving the word a bad rap.

As children, we’re taught that no matter what we do, we should strive to excel at it. It’s a great teaching, undoubtedly, as it instils ambition within us. It’s our ambition that tells us to dream big, aim for the moon, and actually reach it.

But a reality we’re often not prepared for is that sometimes, we may fall short of the mark. Sifting through biographies of extraordinarily talented people doesn’t really prepare us for how difficult the journey to greatness really is. The idea of becoming an astronaut is glamorous as a child, but learning all the physics along the way can be gruelling, especially if you don’t have an exceptional aptitude for it.

The basics come easy to many earlier on, helping them stand out from the crowd fuelling their ambitions. As the going gets tougher, they find that their peers have not only caught on, but they might have even outrun them by miles. Whether it’s gifted kid burnout syndrome or the big-fish-little-pond effect makes little difference at this point.

The fact of the matter is, the much-dreaded word “average” becomes a reality many of us have to accept here. We’re ill-equipped to swallow such a bitter pill – the realisation that maybe Hogwarts is real, we just didn’t get the acceptance letter.

Despite it being completely out of our hands, being average-looking is also often seen as undesirable. We think that looking average makes us unnoticeable, and maybe even less likely to be successful when it comes to romance. A person who doesn’t entirely fit into the conventional

beauty standards may not be immediately perceived as extremely attractive to everyone. But it doesn’t negate the fact that these standards are nothing but a social construct, and beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Someone’s style, confidence, humour, or other traits are what draws us to them most of the time.

Truth be told, being average is not the curse we think it is. Data tends to gather around the central value anyway, which means that most people are actually average. Let’s take the idealised scenario that you’re average at everything. The upside? You’re not particularly bad, you’re about as good as most people at literally everything.

Maybe you find out you’re average at the thing you desperately want to pursue. Well, you may not be the best in your field, but it doesn’t mean your life is over. You can reach your goal with some effort, and enjoy doing something you always wanted. An average person can also strive for excellence, even if they have to work harder at it than the gifted ones.

So, if you’re someone who’s struggling with accepting your averageness, I hear you and you’re definitely not alone. If the earlier words didn’t help you, remember that the average side characters rarely get saddled with the dangerous task of saving the world from near-invincible villains, and can have fun in the wholesome filler episodes instead. And they’re just as beloved to us as the main characters for their unique quirks and lovable personalities.

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Bangladeshi activists join Global Climate Strike

Among the attendees were organisations such as YouthNet for Climate Justice, Climate Network Bangladesh, Action Aid, the Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) Bangladesh, 350.org Bangladesh, and many others.

USRAAT FAHMIDAH

On September 15, hundreds of young climate activists across Bangladesh organised climate strikes across the country. Organised by various environmental groups and youth movements, the climate strike held in Bangladesh is a part of the Global Climate Strike organised by Fridays for Future. This year’s Global Climate Strike marks the fifth anniversary of the movement started by climate activist Greta Thunberg.

The strike unfolded simultaneously in 25 districts, including Dhaka, Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Tangail, Chittagong, Cox’s Bazar, Feni, Noakhali, Bandarban, Barisal, Jhalokati, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barguna, Sylhet, Habiganj, Moulvibazar, Khulna, Satkhira, Jessore, Bagerhat, Narail, Mymensingh, Netrokona, and Gaibandha.

In Dhaka, the climate strike was held outside the National Press Club. The strike

started at 9:30 AM, and within half an hour the area outside the National Press Club turned into a sea of colourful banners and placards as climate activists from diverse backgrounds joined. A stretch of the road was filled with these young activists chanting powerful slogans like “Fund our future,” “We want Justice,” and “Save our Future.”

Rifat Anik, an organiser representing Stories of Change, shared, “It was truly inspiring to witness the overwhelming presence of young individuals. Strikes of this nature play an important role in raising awareness, particularly among the climate generation.”

Sohanur Rahman, executive coordinator of the YouthNet for Climate Justice, said, “We cannot afford to add more fuel to the fire.”

The rally urged an end to the financing of fossil fuel projects, a transition towards

renewable energy sources, and an increase in climate finance to combat the climate crisis. “The era of new fossil fuels is over. Our future depends on leaving them in the ground,” added Sohanur in a press release.

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Usraat Fahmidah is a high-school graduate.



ILLUSTRATION: ANISUR RAHMAN

Leisure time is not wasted time

RAFID KHANDAKER

Have you ever felt guilty for not being productive enough? Maybe you went out with your friends or just slept in the entire day.

Perhaps you just wanted a day off. Whenever this happens to me, I can’t help but feel the shackles of capitalism tugging on me to work more. And it gets very difficult to not feel like I’ve just wasted my time doing all these things that I love, discouraging me from doing them again. But is this a healthy way to live? And does leisure time always equate to wasted time? I don’t think so, and here’s why.

Firstly, resting is an integral part of productivity. Our bodies and minds are not meant to constantly function in work mode. Taking off days is just as important as days where you work all day because the former fuels you and re-energises you for the latter. If you’re working constantly without a break, you’ll be too spent to provide the best output in whatever you’re doing. Not to mention, your body will not be able to take it, causing seemingly unprecedented illnesses. As a result, your work will be sub-par, which may lead to you working more, scrapping the entire project, or even missing out on opportunities.

Furthermore, even if someone were to discard the idea that leisure can be productive, is labour the entire point of life? Are we meant to toil away every day trying to climb up our career ladders with no regard for the things we actually enjoy? These are becoming increasingly relevant questions today as there’s a push now to monetise even our hobbies. While there is nothing wrong with earning money from something you enjoy, creating pressure for people to do the same is not the way to go, as often it can suck the enjoyment out of the hobby and reinforce the idea that if it’s not making money, it’s not worth doing.

Hustle culture has normalised such ideas, lauding the benefits that an intense work environment brings. Many point towards the immense economic success of countries such as South Korea and Japan, owing much of it to their extreme work culture. However, despite the benefits this has brought, it has also led to a myriad of issues, such as high suicide rates, mass social seclusion, and alarming mental health conditions among civilians. The flowery picture painted by hustle culture enthusiasts is not what it seems to be, and this toxic obsession over working hard is bound to bring forth many such hidden detriments.

We need to stop denigrating leisure as a waste of time or something to feel guilty about. It is an important aspect of a healthy life, both physically and mentally, one that will not only increase our enjoyment of life but also improve our productivity. Therefore, we should instead treat it as a complement to working and not as a substitute to it, so that we can all achieve our ideal work-life balance.

ILLUSTRATION: FAISAL BIN IQBAL

