

ELEGANTLY INTELLIGENT

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ARE WE LOOKING FOR LUXURY in all the wrong places?

Luxury — the golden buzzword with endless possibilities and promises. Which begets the question, what is luxury to you? Living in a fancy apartment, driving a prestige car? Perhaps, carrying designer handbags?

Sure, these are markers of a luxurious lifestyle by all means. An enhanced way of living with every imaginable perk is definitely desirable for us all. But in a post-COVID world, is that all there is to a life of luxury? Surely not. When being able to breathe freely without fear of death looming ominously became our reality, then came a shift in our perspective.

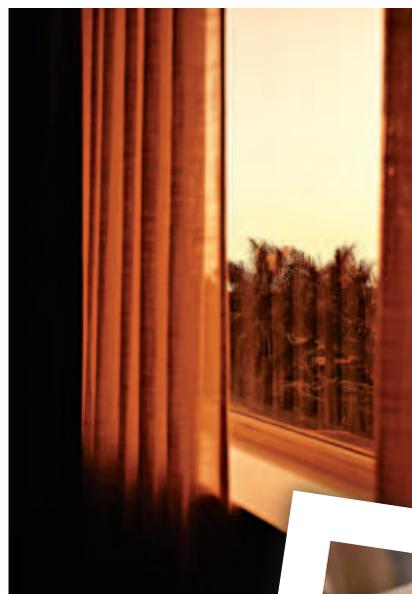
Traditional ideas of opulence and extravagance are hardly considered luxurious anymore; evolved individuals now focus on a more holistic approach that includes tailor-made, personal experiences, sustainability, social and spiritual growth. Real luxury is so much more than just possessions, so let me elaborate!

A slow morning that does not begin with the jarring sound of an alarm; you wake up at your own pace, slowly and steadily, and you let the soft rays of the morning sun kiss your face.

Brewing your coffee in your French press, you look out the window, content and calm as the sprawling greenery and foliage outside soothe your mind. And then you leisurely plan your day while sipping your coffee with no deadlines looming over your head.

Sounds like a luxury, right? Because it is!

Experts argue that after all is said and done, real status and power hide behind the veneer of perceived luxury. In other words, freedom and control over one's life, peace and security, being anxiety-free, is a real luxury in today's world. The ultimate sign of freedom is being totally secure in one's own skin and not having to cover one's person with expensive goods to



appear wealthy.

For those in the know, being disconnected, savouring trivial matters, and just being present in the moment defines true luxury. A recent survey showed that in Silicon Valley, the very inventors who invent and develop cutting-edge, latest technologies do not welcome said innovations in their own homes and personal spaces.

Their children are not exposed to gadgets or social media at all. Instead, they are raised in an old-fashioned way through human interaction, connection, and communication.

Sounds like an oxymoron, right? That survey also found that these guys are

heavily invested in prioritising family life, often sharing parental roles with their spouses, the majority of whom are stay-at-home mothers.

Raising children, fostering family relationships, and building 'villages' or communities that act as emotional safety nets, are considered to be the rare, real privilege of the wealthy.

It is in sharp contrast to the stressful lives of the masses, juggling multiple jobs and struggling to make ends meet.

So, yes! School runs, being able to help with your child's school projects, cooking a meal together without having to worry about making ends meet, is a real luxury not afforded to many.

How many times have you taken a

home-cooked meal for granted? Prepared with intention, with organic ingredients sourced with care, it is a luxury not many have. Sounds trivial? It is anything but!

A healthy diet leads to a healthy body, sound mind, and overall health countenance that, in turn, ensures one is thriving. So, the age-old adage 'health is wealth' stands true, regardless of being a cliché.

Families struggling to make ends meet tend to have poor eating habits, which, in turn, affects their lives in more ways than one. Unhealthy food habits lead to diseases which require more funding to survive, causing money to drain. It is a vicious cycle that is tough to break. Hence, if you're fortunate enough to have healthy, home-cooked meals, it is indeed a luxury!

And lastly, among other things, are relationships. We tend to take some for granted, others we work for, so on and so forth. One might be wondering why this is even relevant, but the fact of the matter is that being surrounded by a bunch of individuals who truly care about you and are there for you is perhaps the greatest luxury of all.

Allow me to explain. People who are in your closest circle are those with whom you can be yourself, without any fear of judgment. They laugh with you and cry too. Their presence feels like a warm embrace that will catch you should you ever fall. In that regard, trust and respect follow closely. These individuals are trustworthy and love you unconditionally, which makes them invaluable, and hence, a real luxury.

So, my dearest gentle readers, look around you, take a deep breath and embrace the simple but meaningful luxuries that you are blessed with!

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan
Photo: Collected

#FYI

Your brain prioritises criticism over praise — Here's why



Imagine this: you've received a dozen compliments in one day, but a single offhand insult leaves you brooding. Interestingly, research shows that this is not oversensitivity, but rather a biological phenomenon. Our brains are hardwired to give more attention and emotional weight to negative experiences than positive

ones. This phenomenon is known as "negativity bias", a deeply ingrained survival mechanism.

A 2021 neuroscience review confirmed this: negative stimuli produce stronger brain activity than equally intense positive stimuli, underscoring the depth of the negativity bias.

In ancestral environments where

threats were immediate and survival depended on detecting danger quickly, this bias made sense.

Today, threats are rarely predators but missed deadlines, network failures, or social slights. Yet, our brain still treats negative signals as high-priority alarms and then seldom turns them off!

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11