

Why Is Everyone So Messed Up? Carl Jung Explains Neurosis

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Theme: [History](#)

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Neuroticism is "a tendency toward anxiety, depression, self-doubt, and other negative feelings," as succinctly defined by [Psychology Today](#).

One thing you notice living abroad in *certain* (not all) non-Western countries, coming from the West, is the neuroticism differential.

Westerners in Bangkok, for instance, get super mad when the bus doesn't come on time. To cope, they verbally berate minimum-wage workers who have no control over the matter whatsoever. In contrast, the locals shrug their shoulders, chalk it up to fate or whatever, and take the punches as they come.

One comes away with the awful impression that the bus tardiness is not, in the ultimate analysis, the source of the farang's consternation ("farang" being local jargon for "white foreigner").

Carl Jung, famed psychoanalyst of posterity, agrees.

Per the video, the basic Jungian dilemma goes like this:

- An individual encounters a problem/crisis.
- The problem or crisis remains unresolved due to an inability or unwillingness to confront it: "If we follow the history of a neurosis with attention, we regularly find a critical moment when some problem emerged that was evaded." -Carl Jung
- The mental discomfort caused by the unresolved problem or crisis is subconsciously repressed by displacing emotions, self-medicating or engaging in ritual distraction. In one case study, Jung notes of a subject: "By suppressing disagreeable thoughts she created something like a psychic vacuum which, as usually happens, gradually became filled with anxiety."

"I am not altogether pessimistic about neurosis... Neurosis is really an attempt at self-cure...It is an attempt of the self-regulating psychic system to restore the balance, in no way different from the function of dreams - only rather more forceful and drastic." -Carl Jung, *The Symbolic Life*

Unfortunately for the prospects of overcoming neurosis, distraction in the civilized world is easier than ever.

Via [Computers in Human Behaviors Reports](#):

"The pervasiveness of the Internet has raised concern about its (problematic) use and the potentially negative impact on people's health. Neuroticism has been identified as one potential risk factor of Internet and other online addictions... High levels of neuroticism significantly correlated with all measures of problematic Internet activities."

Another important factor to consider, offered in the above video (which might speak to the modern world's neuroticism pandemic) is the helicopter-parenting phenomenon. The child remains an infant forever — never exposed to danger or challenge.

[#AiLust](#) Day 4 - The Garden

"And in the evenings, we stayed out playing in the garden til dusk. No smart phones. No Tik Tok. No helicopter parenting. Just unadulterated joy, endless summer afternoons of childhood."[#midjourney](#) [#midjourneyart](#) [#midjourneyV4](#) [#aiart](#) [@Ai_Lust_](#) [pic.twitter.com/5ISMvMs6o6](#)

— [The Andorian](#) (@Sunriseonsuper8) [February 16, 2023](#)

As a result of never getting out from under the watchful eye of the parent, the sheltered child simply doesn't learn through trial and error - the only way to really do it — how to face difficulty and come out on the other side stronger and wiser:

"Though it is a misfortune for a child to have no parents, it is equally dangerous for him to be too closely bound to his family. An excessively strong attachment to the parent is a severe handicap in his later adaptation to the world, for a growing human being is not destined to remain forever the child of his parents." -Carl Jung

Lastly, the [COVID-19 hysteria and lockdowns](#) didn't do any wonders in terms of combatting neurosis either. Via [CNBC](#):

"In 2021 and 2022, the 30 and younger group experienced a significant increase in neuroticism, which is a tendency to see the world as distressing or unsafe, and a decrease in agreeableness and conscientiousness."

In the future you won't read history books. You'll see a video like this one and go "I got it, I know what 2020 was like".[pic.twitter.com/2A1riplyo](#)

— The Conundrum (@wakeupfromcovid) [November 10, 2021](#)

What we have here is a toxic cocktail of negative social trends and influences that, taken together, seem to dramatically increase neurosis.

Everyone is neurotic to some degree. As Psychology Today annotates in its definition of neurosis, "all personality traits, including neuroticism, exist on a spectrum—some people are just much more neurotic than others."

So no one is ever going to shirk neurosis totally. But there are ways to conquer it so that it doesn't hijack your life: face down your fears head-on. Get out of your own headspace. Brave the unknown. Get outside. Ditch the social media. It's the only way forward.

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