

We're Still Obsessed With Individualism

Individualism won't save us



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I had two experiences this past week, that illustrated this point clearly. The first one was a conversation on an online dating site. My female counterpart seemed nice enough. I think we had a good convo going. Then she found out, that I share an apartment with my dad. She immediately broke off contact. I'm not mad. I understand. After all, you are only a fully emancipated person if you have your own household. At least, that is what we have been conditioned to think. In a capitalist society, it is incomprehensible, why some people choose to not follow this path. We are obsessed with individualism.

Anyhow, I still decided to question my life choice. To get some clarity, I signed up for an apartment viewing, not far from where I live. It was a single-room apartment. 35 square meters and near the city limit of east Berlin. The rent was about 600 Euros. This is a bit more than my current

share in rent. My dad and I share a four-bedroom apartment of about 95 square meters.

The day of the viewing rolled around. Naturally, I was not the only one interested. There were about 75 other people. Not just students. There were also people who were older than me.

I got my clarity.

Why on earth should I do this? I have everything I need now. Currently, I have more space, than what the apartment offered. I pay less rent. I get along fine with my dad. There is plenty of space for us to get out of each other's way if we need to. From the apartment, I have excellent transport options. I am happy with my choice. If that is a problem for other people, why should I care?

Individualism Is a Ressource Hog

Resources are scarce. The consequences of our overexploitation is finally coming to western countries as well. This makes our western obsession with individualism even more batshit crazy. It just makes it worse.

75 people competed for a 35 square meter apartment in the far East of Berlin. That should tell you, how pressured the housing market already is. Why do we continue perpetuating this myth, then? It never occurred to my online dating companion, that living how I do was a conscious choice. How could it? In western culture, this is the ultimate status symbol. You made it if you can occupy the maximum amount of resources possible.

Two individuals are only worth something under one condition. They need to occupy twice as many resources as they would together. So, according to western standards, I am a loser.

I'm fine with it. Even if it may ruin my chances in the dating game for good. There is absolutely no reason to buy into this extremely unsustainable myth of individualism.

If our civilization wants to survive, we need to find more ways to stop hogging resources. We need to build communities. Communities with people you cherish, and love. For most of us, that includes family members.

We Bet on the Wrong Horse All Along

Whenever I traveled and volunteered overseas, I noticed a peculiar thing. People who lived in communities seemed much happier. I saw it in Latin

America when a family of four generations huddled around a telenovela. Or in rural Africa. When the children gathered around the elders to hear stories under the starlight.

In the West, we all strive to live in our own places. We let people die alone and don't notice their corpses rot. We think that happiness is two people having big kitchens. But both of them do not have time to even make sandwiches. Because it takes so much work to keep these kitchens in the first place.

We're facing the biggest energy crisis humanity has ever witnessed. And we think it is a great idea to continue pushing the idea of everybody heating their own homes. Because sharing resources reminds us too much of what? Communism? Failure?

No thank you. I am going to stay right where I am. It is my choice, and I am happy with it. I am fine with sharing an apartment with my dad. Life is about more than material things. I rather spend my scarce resources on other matters.