

Hikikomori - Shamed by Defeat - Psalms 44:15

-current situation

Psalms 44:15 - My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,

Hikikomori; literally "pulling inward, being confined", i.e., "acute social withdrawal") is a Japanese term to refer to the phenomenon of reclusive adolescents or young adults who withdraw from social life, often seeking extreme degrees of isolation and confinement. The term hikikomori refers to both the sociological phenomenon in general as well as to people belonging to this societal group.

The Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare defines hikikomori as people who refuse to leave their house and, thus, isolate themselves from society in their homes for a period exceeding six months. The psychiatrist Tamaki Sait defines hikikomori as "A state that has become a problem by the late twenties, that involves cooping oneself up in one's own home and not participating in society for six months or longer, but that does not seem to have another psychological problem as its principal source." More recently, researchers have suggested six specific criteria required to "diagnose" hikikomori.

- 1) Spending most of the day and nearly every day confined to home.**
- 2) Marked and persistent avoidance of social situations.**
- 3) Symptoms interfering significantly with the person's normal routine, occupational (or academic) functioning, or social activities or relationships.**
- 4) Perceiving the withdrawal as ego-syntonic/**

Ego-syntonic is a psychological term referring to behaviors, values, feelings that are in harmony with or acceptable to the needs and goals of the ego, or consistent with one's ideal self-image.

Ego-dystonic (or ego alien) is the opposite of egosyntonic and refers to thoughts and behaviors (e.g., dreams, impulses, compulsions, desires, etc.) that are in conflict, or dissonant, with the needs and goals of the ego, or, further, in conflict with a person's ideal self-image.

- 5) Duration at least six months.**
- 6) No other mental disorder that accounts for the social withdrawal and avoidance.**

While the degree of the phenomenon varies on an individual basis, in the most extreme cases, some people remain in isolation for years or even decades. The Ministry of Health estimates that about 3,600,000 hikikomori

live in Japan, about one third of whom are aged 30 and older.

Common traits

While many people feel the pressures of the outside world, hikikomori react by complete social withdrawal. In some cases, they lock themselves in their room, apartment or house for prolonged periods, sometimes measured in years. They usually have few, if any, friends.

While hikikomori favor indoor activities, some venture outdoors on occasion. The withdrawal from society usually starts gradually. Affected people may appear unhappy, lose their friends, become insecure, shy, and talk less.

Prevalence

According to government figures released in 2010, there are 700,000 individuals living as hikikomori with an average age of 31. Still, the numbers vary widely from expert to expert. Among these are the hikikomori that are now in their 40s and have spent 20 years in isolation, this group is generally referred to as the "first-generation hikikomori," and there is concern about their reintegration into society in what is known as "the 2030 problem," when they are in their 60s and their parents begin to die off. Additionally the government estimates 1.55 million people to be on the verge of becoming hikikomori. Originally psychologist Tamaki Sait, who first coined the phrase, estimated that there may be over one million hikikomori in Japan, or approximately 1% of the total Japanese population, but considering that hikikomori adolescents are hidden away and their parents are often reluctant to talk about the problem, it is extremely difficult to gauge the number accurately.

People who have all the characteristics of a hikikomori have also begun to emerge in France, Canada and the USA. Many of these are addicts to video games.

Theories on cause usually involve PDDs and autism spectrum disorders. Hikikomori is similar to the social withdrawal exhibited by some people with pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs), a group of disorders that include Asperger syndrome, PDD-NOS and "classic" autism. This has led some psychiatrists to suggest that hikikomori sufferers may be affected by PDDs and other disorders, and PTSD, that affect social integration, but that their disorders are altered from their typical Western presentation because of the social and cultural pressures unique to Japan.

The syndrome also closely parallels the terms "avoidant personality disorder" and "social anxiety disorder" (also known as "social phobia").

Social and cultural influence

Though acute social withdrawal in Japan appears to affect both genders

equally, because of differing social expectations for maturing boys and girls, the most widely reported cases of hikikomori are from middle- and upper-middle-class families whose sons, typically their eldest, refuse to leave the home, often after experiencing one or more traumatic episodes of social or academic failure.

The dominant nexus of hikikomori centers on the transformation from youth to the responsibilities and expectations of adult life. Indications are that advanced industrialised societies such as modern Japan fail to provide sufficient meaningful transformation rituals for promoting certain susceptible types of youth into mature roles. As do many societies, Japan exerts a great deal of pressure on adolescents to be successful and perpetuate the existing social status quo. Historically, Confucian teachings de-emphasizing the individual and favoring a conformist stance to ensure social harmony in a rigidly hierarchized society have shaped much of East Asia, possibly explaining the emergence of the hikikomori phenomenon in other East Asian countries. Here, in North America, John Dewey, the self-acclaimed father of modern education, has said that socialization, not learning, is the prime objective of the education system.

In general, the prevalence of hikikomori tendencies in Japan may be encouraged and facilitated by three primary factors:

Middle class affluence in a post-industrial society such as Japan allows parents to support and feed an adult child in the home indefinitely. Lower-income families do not have hikikomori children because a socially withdrawing youth is forced to work outside the home.

The inability of Japanese parents to recognize and act upon the youth's slide into isolation; soft parenting; or even a co-dependent collusion between mother and son.

A decade of flat economic indicators and a shaky job market in Japan makes the pre-existing system requiring years of competitive schooling for elite jobs appear like a pointless effort to many. While Japanese fathers of the current generation of youth still enjoy lifetime employment at multinational corporations, incoming employees in Japan enjoy no such guarantees in today's job market.

Some younger Japanese people begin to suspect that the system put in place for their grandfathers and fathers no longer works, and for some, the lack of a clear life goal makes them susceptible to social withdrawal as a hikikomori.

Japanese education system

The Japanese education system, like those found in China, Singapore and South Korea, puts great demands upon youth. A multitude of expectations, high emphasis on competition, and the rote memorization of facts and figures

for the purpose of passing entrance exams into the next tier of education in what could be termed a rigid pass-or-fail ideology, induce a high level of stress. Echoing the traditional Confucian values of society, the educational system is still viewed as playing an important part in society's overall productivity and success.

In this social frame, students often face significant pressure from parents and the society in general to conform to its dictates and doctrines. These doctrines, while part of modern Japanese society, are increasingly being rejected by Japanese youth in varying ways such as hikikomori, freeter, NEET (Not currently engaged in Employment, Education, or Training), and parasite singles. The term "Hodo-Hodo zoku" (the "So-So tribe") applies to younger workers who refuse promotion to minimize stress and maximize free time.

Beginning in the 1960s, the pressure on Japanese youth to succeed began successively earlier in their lives, sometimes starting before pre-school, where even toddlers had to compete through an entrance exam for the privilege of attending one of the best pre-schools. This was said to prepare children for the entrance exam of the best kindergarten, which in turn prepared the child for the entrance exam of the best elementary school, junior high school, high school, and eventually for their university entrance exam. Many adolescents take one year off after high school to study exclusively for the university entrance exam, and are known as ronin. More prestigious universities have more difficult exams. The most prestigious university with the most difficult exam is the University of Tokyo.

Since 1996, the Japanese Ministry of Education has taken steps to address this 'pressure-cooker' educational environment and instill greater creative thought in Japanese youth by significantly relaxing the school schedule from six day weeks to five day weeks and dropping two subjects from the daily schedule, with new academic curricula more comparable to Western educational models. However, Japanese parents are sending their children to private cram schools, to 'make up' for lost time.

After graduating from high school or university, Japanese youth also have to face a very difficult job market in Japan, often finding only part-time employment and ending up as freeters with little income, unable to start a family.

Another source of pressure is from their co-students, who may harass and bully some students for a variety of reasons, including physical appearance (especially if they are overweight or have severe acne problems), wealth, educational or athletic performance. Some have been punished for bullying or truancy, bringing shame to their families. Refusal to participate in society makes hikikomori an extreme subset of a much larger group of younger Japanese that includes parasite singles and freeters.

So, in order to succeed, a pressure cooker system is in effect. The victors get the spoils; the losers get nothing. Having lost face, they retreat into themselves; as they have been conditioned by the Shame Society.

A shame culture, also called honour-shame culture or shame society, is the concept that, in a given society, the primary device for gaining control over children and maintaining social order is the inculcation of shame and the complementary threat of ostracism. A shame society is contrasted with a guilt society in which control is maintained by creating and continually reinforcing the feeling of guilt (and the expectation of punishment now or in the afterlife) for certain condemned behaviors.

Here in the West, shame is used as one modality of control, but its primary dependence rests on guilt, and, when that does not work, the criminal justice system.

Paul G. Hiebert characterizes the shame society as follows:

"Shame is a reaction to other people's criticism, an acute personal chagrin at our failure to live up to our obligations and the expectations others have of us. In true shame oriented cultures, every person has a place and a duty in the society. One maintains self-respect, not by choosing what is good rather than what is evil, but by choosing what is expected of one."

Personal desires are sunk in the collective expectation. Those who fail will often turn their aggression against themselves instead of using violence against others. By punishing themselves they maintain their self-respect before others, for shame cannot be relieved, as guilt can be, by confession and atonement. Shame is removed and honor restored only when a person does what the society expects of him or her in the situation, including committing suicide if necessary.

- being used over here by shaming people into submission, or behaviour modification; posting offenders on sites to shame them to conform.

- Thankfully, born-again believers don't have to be bound by the shame society.

- We have forgiveness through the Shed Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The Bible mentions shame.

- In Adam and Eve's innocency, they had no shame.

Genesis 2:25 - And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

- Then they sinned, and ran away from Jesus Christ.

Genesis 3:10 - And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

- There are many aspects to shame; we'll look at a few of them.

Tamar - victim of abuse - rape

2 Samuel 13:13 - And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

Joab's soldiers not appreciated for hard work

2 Samuel 19:3 - And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

2 Samuel 19:5 - And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

-Under the New Covenant; we have Grace, not condemnation.

Romans 8:1 - There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Paul outlines the difference between Biblical Christianity and the other religions.

Romans 5:1-5 - Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Hebrews 12:2 - Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Mark 8:38 - Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

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