

UNITED WISDOM

Constant Novelty and the Loss of a Taste for the Ordinary

The Person and the Inner World

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

I-25-N01 · EN

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

Constant Novelty and the Loss of a Taste for the Ordinary

Epigraph

> *“The eye is not satisfied”.*

Ecclesiastes 1:8, World English Bible. This is the voice of biblical wisdom literature reflecting on human searching, not a contemporary law about how the brain works.

What this article is about

Imagine Nikolai, a fictional person planning a day off. His list includes a new exhibition, a recently opened venue, unfamiliar music, and a route he has never walked. A familiar walk seems too simple. Yet when the new programme ends, he is already looking for the next one. This does not immediately establish dependence or a lack of gratitude. A more precise question is what he wanted from something new, what he actually received, and why the familiar option was rejected before encountering it. Perhaps he needs a change after a difficult week. Perhaps newness has become his main selection criterion, and nobody has examined it yet.

The title names a question rather than an established causal chain. Continually changing impressions does not prove that someone has damaged their capacity for enjoyment. An unpleasant ordinary day does not necessarily become good with the right attention. Still, it helps to distinguish an event’s novelty from interest in it, satiation with one particular impression from a broader change in participation in life. We will examine those distinctions through hypothetical everyday scenes. These are not actual histories of the authors or clients, and the suggested practice is neither therapy nor a promise to restore a substance, system, or psychological function.

The biblical question of dissatisfaction, Thoreau’s literary simplicity, and enjoyment research do not explain human beings in one language. One concerns wisdom, another an author’s way of living, and the third findings from particular studies. Selected primary passages and scientific abstracts were read here, within the stated limits. A countervailing finding also matters: repetition can be more enjoyable than expected. We will therefore not make the new an enemy of the ordinary. The aim is to restore a choice between them in response to an actual question, rather than the automatic rule that the next thing must be better.

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

I. New Does Not Yet Mean Interesting

In our scene, Nikolai selects an exhibition because he has not been there. That is a clear reason: he wants an encounter with the unknown. It does not reveal what will attract him to the exhibition, however. He may want a new subject, a different space, time with friends, or simply a changed route. When expectations are unnamed, any novelty may temporarily occupy the place of an answer. Another distinction then arises: was the activity suitable, or did it merely satisfy the condition of not having been encountered before? Those outcomes differ. The second does not make the day meaningless, but it leaves the question of interest open and prevents assigning an event a promise it never made.

The familiar, conversely, does not mean completely known. You may have walked the route in a hurry, heard the music in the background, or read the text for one answer. A previous encounter exists, but not necessarily exhaustive knowledge. Yet this argument cannot become an obligation endlessly to return to everything either. Sometimes an object genuinely no longer fits an interest, and a new direction is needed. Precision distinguishes “This has happened before,” “This does not suit me now,” and “There is nothing to discover here.” The last needs stronger grounds than a simple memory of a previous visit or viewing.

Ask what would change in the choice if “new” disappeared from the description. Would the subject, author, company, convenient time, or your own question remain? This is an editorial check on a reason, not an experiment on everyone’s behaviour. Sometimes it reveals novelty as the offer’s only attractive element. At other times, novelty merely accompanies an important intention. The first option need not be wrong in advance: encountering the unknown is a legitimate aim too. But when a decision involves a significant investment of time or money, it helps to know which expectation you are actually prepared to support and how it can be checked.

II. Imagining a Repeat and Actually Repeating

The indexed author’s abstract read from Ed O’Brien’s 2019 paper describes underestimated enjoyment of repeated activities in the situations studied. This concerns a difference between prediction and experience, not a rule that repetition always beats novelty. Full methods and data were not read here. The finding keeps a question open: something familiar may contain previously unnoticed details. Our next step is editorial: establish whether a person declined repetition after a present experience or on the basis of an expectation beforehand. The same outward refusal can draw on different material for a decision.

Nikolai may remember the familiar walk as an already completed item. Its place name alone remains in the mental description. But an actual day off would include weather, conversation, pace, present circumstances, and whatever draws attention. Those differences guarantee no

pleasure; they merely show that a remembered route is not identical to a future episode. You can choose the familiar path or another one. The decision should not be called scientifically proven merely because a study found a particular forecasting error among its participants. You may examine an appropriate everyday question while preserving the limits of that examination.

Sometimes previous experience provides sufficient reasons not to repeat. A place is inconvenient, an activity unpleasant, the cost does not fit the purpose, or conditions are unsafe. Returning to prove openness to the ordinary is unnecessary. The researcher's counterargument challenges an overly general assumption about repeats, rather than cancelling particular reasons to decline. In a personal decision, separate familiarity from those reasons. When you say "There again," ask what "again" conceals: exhausted interest, undesirable conditions, pressure from someone else, or simply an expectation that something familiar deserves no further attention.

III. Adaptation Has a Particular Object

In their 2013 study, Quoidbach and Dunn compared chocolate enjoyment after a week of different assigned consumption conditions. Only the publisher's abstract was read here: it reports a particular experience, not the cause of someone's entire information or emotional life. It yields neither instructions to restrict food nor a promise that giving up pleasures will restore joy. Here, the study marks a boundary for discussing adaptation: the object, period, and assessment need specifying. "I'm used to everything" does not itself reveal which experiences actually recurred or what changed within them.

Ordinary description can distinguish several cases. A familiar song no longer surprises but remains pleasant. A new activity surprises, but you do not want to continue. A favourite activity is enjoyable, yet you are tired now. The similar response "I don't want more" may have different grounds. These examples are editorial and establish no mechanism of experience. They protect against a quick label that promises to explain everything. If Nikolai no longer expects a familiar walk to surprise him, its value has not necessarily disappeared. If the walk genuinely no longer fits, that does not make all further novelty pointless either.

The distinction helps even when a precise cause cannot be found. You can describe it plainly: this part of the activity used to appeal and no longer does; conditions have changed; the expectation remains. Such a note is not an explanation of the nervous system. It supplies material for a limited decision: change conditions, select another activity, rest, or discuss a persistent difficulty. Do not derive a universal break duration from a paper investigating another object. A term for adaptation authorises no transfer of a chocolate experiment to relationships, sleep, professional care, or daily obligations. Those areas have their own conditions and consequences of intervention.

IV. Repetition Need Not Be a Copy

Repeating an action can invite an expectation of precisely the same outcome. Sometimes, however, interest lies in differences within the familiar. Someone returns to a book and notices an argument missed earlier, makes something familiar and understands one step’s workings, or takes the usual route with a new question. These are possible scenes, not promised effects of attention. Their common question is whether another accessible object of interest remains without changing the entire activity. The answer may be no. Repetition then becomes no obligation, and observation should not invent discoveries to justify the chosen idea.

Going deeper also differs from trying to reproduce a first impression. A first encounter contains an unknown that cannot be restored by a command. A later encounter may bring understanding, precision, recognition, or quiet familiarity. Demanding the earlier surprise makes those outcomes look insufficient. Ask what you want now. You may genuinely want the unknown and a change of place; the familiar then fails to meet the request. Alternatively, you may want to engage more attentively while measuring the result by novelty. Noticing the gap between intention and measure helps without declaring either permanently correct.

The ordinary need not reveal infinite depths. Sometimes a cup remains a cup, a road a road, and familiar music a convenient accompaniment. That is no failure of perception. A daily demand to find a miracle may be as tiring as a daily demand to change impressions. A simpler possibility remains: use the object, walk the road, and hear the music without reporting a transformation. Nikolai can choose the familiar walk precisely because he wants no new task. A quiet absence of discovery then fits the intention and need not be declared a wasted life or a weak observation result.

V. Value and Pleasure Do Not Entirely Coincide

Some familiar actions matter without intense pleasure: fulfilling a promise, making an ordinary meal, or keeping a shared undertaking in order. Their value can be respected without demanding excitement. If everyday experience is judged only by the strength of a new impression, these actions lose before they begin. This is an editorial comparison, not a claim that everyone judges days that way. Examine your own measure: do you now want something pleasant, important, intelligible, shared, or simply manageable? The answer may include several needs that one activity need not satisfy simultaneously.

Value must not justify every unsuitable condition, however. You may know why caring for loved ones matters while needing rest, help, or revised responsibilities. “Learn to love the ordinary” can miss the actual difficulty in that situation. A question about enjoyment does not replace a question about available energy and the distribution of work. The activity’s value can be preserved while its organisation changes. Nikolai chooses a day off after a working week;

that differs from having no day off or opportunity to choose. One example supplies no general solution for both situations.

Sometimes a sense of inadequacy arises when comparing your life with another person's account of a busy life. That episode cannot establish envy, dependence on approval, or hidden emptiness in advance. Examine what is being compared: the number of places, vividness of the story, company, or a sense of freedom. If freedom is wanted, another new venue may not provide it. If a shared event is wanted, something familiar may also matter. If a change itself is wanted, that intention can be acknowledged directly. Precision avoids demanding that novelty answer a question about another dimension of the day or blaming yourself for a mismatched outcome.

VI. The Question of Dissatisfaction

At the opening of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher's voice considers repetition and the dissatisfaction of seeing and hearing. This is biblical wisdom literature, not an experimental description of contemporary consumption. The selected text was read, rather than the entire work or its critical authorship history. In an editorial comparison, it raises a question about expectation's boundary: what outcome would count as enough? A religious fragment does not determine the reader's answer. A new impression can be desirable, but if it must settle every question permanently, it has been assigned a task worth discussing separately.

Suppose Nikolai wanted to end his day off feeling that he had missed nothing. Under that expectation, one new route is hard to make sufficient: others always remain. You can choose an enjoyable activity while knowing it excludes many alternatives. That is an ordinary aspect of limited time, not proof of a mistaken choice. The question is whether a particular limit is accepted or the activity continues to be judged against unavailable completeness. Accepting a limit does not mean agreeing to every condition of life. Here, it concerns one day off and an opportunity to choose its contents without demanding everything.

The biblical question does not oblige an immediate abandonment of searching. It can remain a question without a final answer. Nor should it explain another person's life: "Nothing is enough for you because humans are insatiable." That formula closes a conversation before needs and conditions are established. Someone may not be seeking endless impressions but may have long lacked a particular necessary experience: rest, safety, contact, or an accessible activity. Acknowledging that absence is more accurate than preaching contentment. A tradition expands reflection by distinguishing questions; it should not erase evidence that fails to fit a convenient generalisation.

VII. Simplicity and Its Limits

In the selected Walden paragraphs, Thoreau contrasts haste and numerous activities with the simplicity of his own way of living. This is a literary philosophical perspective, not a general health protocol. His radical proposal about reducing meals appears beside the quotation and is not transferred into the practice here. A more limited question is available: are fewer simultaneous intentions needed now? Our editorial response proposes neither relocation nor abandoning contact, food, or necessary help. It concerns an available choice within one activity, rather than reproducing another person’s entire biography.

Nikolai, for example, plans an exhibition, a route, a meeting with friends, and another venue in one day. He can retain the programme if it matches his energy and wishes. He can choose one main event to have time for it. A smaller number does not automatically confer moral superiority. It may provide a suitable condition or leave a wish for variety unmet. Relate the change to a question: did he want deeper participation in one activity or precisely several different impressions? A simple day need not be good, and a busy day need not be superficial. Both require personal engagement and actual opportunities.

There is also involuntary simplicity that should not be romanticised. Someone may lack money, time, a safe space, or access to new experiences. Advice to value the ordinary sometimes helps and sometimes sounds like refusing to see a restriction. We discuss a freely chosen small trial where it is actually available. It replaces no change in unfavourable conditions and assesses no maturity among those wishing to leave them. You can want more while noticing what is present. Recognising value in one ordinary episode does not mean agreeing that the entire current life is enough and nothing needs to change.

VIII. The New as a Beginning, Beyond an Effect

Novelty can open an interest that will later require repetition. A first lesson, new task, or unfamiliar subject attracts through possible discovery. Further learning nevertheless returns to steps, mistakes, and questions. If the aim remains only a first impression, that too can be noticed. You may encounter different activities without making each a long project. When a result is wanted, however, distinguish introduction from continuation. Nikolai might choose a new activity for one experience or for learning. Those intentions carry different expectations for subsequent encounters, although the beginning looks the same.

Repetition in learning need not be mechanical. The question sometimes changes, a fault becomes visible, or a more precise action becomes possible. Even that guarantees no constant pleasure. You can learn towards an important result while honestly acknowledging a boring stage. Clarify whether that stage is needed, the method fits, and help is available for a difficult step. The article does not propose enduring any burden for discipline. It separates an

action’s lack of surprise from its suitability. Something familiar may be necessary and poorly organised simultaneously; a novel method can sometimes serve the work rather than distract from it.

The new and ordinary can therefore support each other. A new question makes a familiar object worth attention; a familiar foundation permits trying something new without additional complexity. This is an editorial possibility, not a promise of universal balance. A day need not obey a precise novelty percentage. Conditions change, and you may revise an intention. It helps more to distinguish a particular change’s function: beginning learning, rest, inquiry, contact, or simply pleasure. Once its function is clear, choice depends less on one label. There is no need to adopt a permanent identity as a novelty seeker or guardian of the familiar.

IX. A Small Trial Without Deprivation

For observation, choose one ordinary voluntary activity that is safe and does not concern necessary nutrition, sleep, or prescribed care. A short familiar route or small text might fit. First name the expectation: “I think nothing here will interest me.” Then decide whether you actually want to return. Declining is legitimate; earlier experience and present conditions may suffice. If a trial is chosen, it should not become a test of your capacity to value life. This is an editorial suggestion for one question, not a recreation of the chocolate experiment or a clinical assessment of lasting loss of interest.

During the activity, note one accessible object of attention: an argument in the text, a stretch of the route, or a circumstance of the current episode. There is no need deliberately to search for beauty, intensify feelings, or compare yourself with an ideal grateful person. Afterwards, describe what was new within the familiar, what stayed unchanged, and whether the activity was enjoyable at all. An absence of interest is legitimate. It proves neither that repetition is always useless nor that your capacity for enjoyment is impaired. One episode permits revising one prediction, rather than establishing your entire experiential history or cancelling other reasons for a choice.

Ordinary observation particularly needs separating from restriction for a later reward. This article does not propose depriving yourself of pleasures, imposing a food regime, or ending necessary contact to feel more afterwards. You may voluntarily change your schedule, but health and significant obligations require appropriate grounds. In our everyday trial, choosing an activity and seeing whether experience matches expectation is enough. End it if participation intensifies an unpleasant condition or becomes coercive. There is no compulsory endurance period, and a negative result requires no immediate repeat attempt.

X. A Taste for the Ordinary Without Obligatory Excitement

The outcome may be a quiet decision: the familiar activity fits because that is what you want now. Or the opposite: a new route, different subject, company, or rest is needed. No permanent side must be chosen. Nikolai can retain one new event and remove two additions to avoid rushing. He may choose differently next weekend. Observation provides no ready-made formula for all days; it clarifies the grounds for one choice. The ordinary becomes more open to a free response when pleasantness, usefulness, familiarity, and participation are no longer judged by one demand for continuous surprise.

If nothing appeals for a long time and everyday life changes noticeably, the discussion should not be confined to novelty. Appropriate support and competent assessment may be needed regardless of what you read, watch, or choose. This article does not explain that condition or propose recovery by correctly repeating ordinary things. Help can be requested before a cause is certain. Equally, every quiet day need not become a concerning sign. An ordinary change of interest, a tired evening, and a lasting difficulty remain different questions rather than one self-administered diagnostic scale.

A taste for the ordinary does not mean that the ordinary is always enjoyable. It may mean a more precise response: value without surprise exists here; interest I did not expect exists here; nothing needs looking for here now; or conditions need changing here. Novelty retains its place. You can want an encounter with the unknown without demanding that it satisfy all of life permanently. You can return to the familiar without promising a special discovery. Both decisions involve someone who distinguishes intention and outcome, acknowledges limited time, and remains able to revise a choice according to what actually happened.

What this means in practice

Choose one safe voluntary familiar activity: a short text, route, or another ordinary episode without intervening in food, sleep, health, or obligations. Name why you usually choose something new instead. If unclear, record that. Neither a profound cause nor a test of maturity is required. You may decline the trial when conditions do not fit or previous experience gives sufficient grounds to decline.

Before the chosen repeat, record one expectation in ordinary words, such as “I don’t think I’ll notice anything interesting.” During the activity, feelings need not be changed and a discovery need not be produced. Attend to one real question or simply perform the activity. Afterwards, separate the experience’s contents from your response. A familiar detail may be pleasant, a new one unpleasant, and no noticeable change may occur. Those are different legitimate outcomes, not success scores.

Compare the outcome only with the initial expectation. If more interesting, that supports revising one prediction, not proving the benefit of every repeat. If uninteresting, it does not confirm a general inability to enjoy things. Choose a next step: keep the activity, change a safe condition, try something new, or postpone the question. Do not transfer a conclusion to relationships or health without suitable grounds. The trial prescribes no break duration and recreates no scientific intervention.

End the entry with a decision or remaining question. Stop if the exercise intensifies an unpleasant state, demands unwanted restrictions, or becomes an obligation to display gratitude. Daily repetition is unnecessary. If a difficulty lasts and noticeably affects life, discuss appropriate help separately from this editorial reminder. Its possible value is limited to the precision of one choice: what I expected, what I encountered, and what I want to do next, while remaining free to change the intention.

Key quotation

> *“Simplify, simplify”.*

Henry David Thoreau, Walden, Where I Lived, and What I Lived For. The nearby radical proposal to restrict meals is not this article’s instruction; the short fragment leaves a question about the number of simultaneous intentions.

Connections between traditions

• **Biblical wisdom literature:** Ecclesiastes raises a question about repetition and dissatisfaction. Neither a neurological model nor a reader diagnosis.

• **Thoreau’s American literary philosophy:** an author’s challenge to haste and excess. Not a universal life template, food restriction, or compulsory withdrawal.

• **Enjoyment experiments:** Quoidbach and Dunn’s limited chocolate study; O’Brien’s difference between prediction and repeated experience. Abstracts were read, not all methods and data.

• **Editorial comparison:** novelty, interest, pleasantness, and value differ. A repeat may leave room for something new, while the new may open a continuation. No shared consensus on human dissatisfaction is claimed.

Sources

1. *Ecclesiastes* 1:1–11, World English Bible. The selected opening, nearby context, and publisher’s public-domain declaration were read, not the whole work. Historical authorship was not established; the literary voice is the Preacher. Official text.

2. Henry David Thoreau. *Walden*, Where I Lived, and What I Lived For. Project Gutenberg 205. Selected paragraphs on simplicity, haste, and news were read, not the whole work. The print edition was not established. Text.

3. Jordi Quoidbach, Elizabeth W. Dunn. *Give It Up: A Strategy for Combating Hedonic Adaptation*. Social Psychological and Personality Science, 2013, 4(5):563–568. DOI: 10.1177/1948550612473489. The publisher's abstract was read; the restricted full text, methods, and data were not. Publisher.

4. Ed O'Brien. *Enjoy it again: Repeat experiences are less repetitive than people think*. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2019, 116(4):519–540. DOI: 10.1037/pspa0000147. The indexed author's abstract actually returned by PubMed search was read; opening the page directly returned no text. The full paper was not read, and access restrictions were not bypassed through mirrors. PubMed record.

Tags

novelty, ordinary life, attention, interest, enjoyment, value, repetition, expectation, experience, adaptation, choice, free time, rest, change, learning, surprise, simplicity, boundaries, conditions, observation, hypothesis, small trial, support, self-inquiry, Ecclesiastes, Thoreau, wisdom, philosophy, psychology, United Wisdom

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a co-author of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.