

How Cynicism Ruined My Year



And how I'm going to make sure it doesn't happen again in 2016.

Laurie Bullock in **Ideas** on **Jan 11, 2016**

There is only one acceptable way to be unhappy and frustrated about the way our life is going in our society, to mask it with cynicism. It's so easy to joke about how life is going to always be miserable, so we might as well get used to it. [#Thestruggleisreal](#), so I might as well come up with a clever joke to tweet about how tough life can be.

I found throughout 2015 that I was miserable about being miserable. I would joke about how busy I was and how school made me feel like I was dying on the inside, and while the self-deprecating jokes earned a few laughs, it didn't improve my situation or get me anywhere close to happiness.

This generation has more or less been knocked flat on our face as we entered adulthood. We continue to get mixed reviews on whether or not this will be a spoiled and useless generation or a generation that will bring change and life back to our cities. We were told to dream big as children, but once in high school we were told that dreams weren't reality, and we would be lucky to find a steady job we didn't hate all the time.

George Carlin said, "Inside every cynic is a disappointed idealist," and to a certain degree, he's correct. There have been studies from psychologists that show [those who have lower expectations of life tend to be happier](#) than those who have higher expectations. A major aspect of the cynicism that is deeply ingrained in our culture today comes from life not turning out the way that we expected it to, and our disappointment is played off through jokes or outright bitterness towards the world.

It's difficult to navigate the difference between positive thinking and naivety, or hopefulness versus blindness. It's especially difficult to see the line between realistic views of the world and a cynical and bitter outlook. Cynicism is so deeply ingrained in our culture's humor that it can look and sound like realism or mature logic, when in actuality it is self absorbed thinking without spurring any action to change.

Many great stories and opportunities came for me from 2015, but I didn't get to enjoy it because I was wallowing in my boredom and dissatisfaction with the parts of life that were outside of my workplace. I realized once the semester was over and I was away from the busyness of school and internships that it was completely my fault. There were things that I wanted to do, and places that I wanted to see that were possible to achieve, but I was too busy tweeting about how stressed out and miserable I was that I missed out on better things.

There are some cases where we need to lower our expectations in order to enjoy the life that we have in front of us. But there are other cases where we simply need to step back from cynicism and go do the things that we want to do. I was holding myself back, and the cynicism I was using to mask my pain and my boredom was not only preventing me from seeing the fun possibilities that surrounded me, but also kept me wrapped up in my own selfishness.

In 2016 I'm hoping to pay attention to my attitude toward situations and stop entertaining cynical thoughts when they come. I'm going to make more time to do things with friends that I want to do instead of being bitter about not doing anything besides work and school. I'm hoping that 2016 will be a year that I can change my thinking that while life will not be made up of constantly spectacular moments, it doesn't have to be bleak and miserable either.