

dear residents

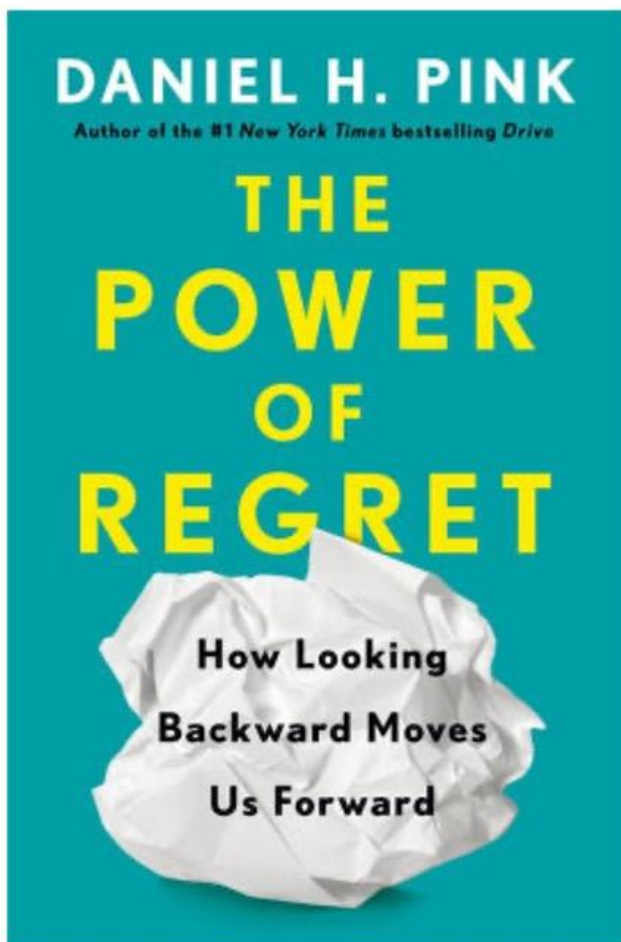
Disappointment vs Regret

February 6, 2022

Dear Residents,

Thank you for defying the winter storm with aplomb. You showed up, you made the effort, you helped each other – you were focused and committed. I also want to thank the chief residents for leading from the front, ensuring that you had places to sleep, safe transportation home and food to eat. The education office staff, under the leadership of Marc Valerin, ensured that we kept close tabs on all your needs.

I am delighted to be reading Daniel Pink's [newest book](#) – **The Power of Regret: How Looking Backward Moves Us Forward**.



Beginning with a discussion of the oft-cited phrase “no regrets” or “[Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien](#)” the title of Edith Piaf’s most famous song, Pink reminds us that “some beliefs operate quietly, like existential background music.” One of these beliefs (no regrets) is to forget the past and live life forward. Yet, regret remains a universal, powerful, and useful emotion which can help propel us forward in life and in our work. He lists three benefits of regret – that it can improve decisions, can boost performance and that it can deepen meaning.

Regret is a feeling – and while feelings can be ignored as annoyances or distractions or honored as the only true thing in life, a third view is to use them as a catalyst for future behavior. Regret is a powerful feeling and distinct from disappointment. We are disappointed when there is an outcome that we had no control over (like our favorite team losing a game) but we experience regret when there is an undesirable outcome which arose from a situation we had control over.

Studying thousands of entries from a world regret [survey](#), Pink discovered four general categories of regrets:

1. **Foundation Regrets**– these generally represent failures in the past of being responsible, conscientious, or prudent. They deal with health, finance, and education regrets. Things we wished we had started, or not started or paid attention to. *“If only I’d done the work.”*
2. **Boldness Regrets** – these occur when we regret not having taken a chance (education, work or love), because we played it safe. *“If only I’d taken the risk.”*
3. **Moral Regrets** – there are times we weren’t “good” and cringe when we recall some of our actions. *“If only I’d done the right thing.”*
4. **Connection Regrets** – Pink states that “our actions give our lives direction, but other people give those lives purpose.” We can regret not honoring this principle. *“If only I’d reached out.”*

I’ve had regrets in all four of these categories, and I expect you have too. My dominant regret is a connection regret. As an immigrant, I didn’t work hard enough to retain connections with loved ones I’d left behind. Years later, I regret not having done so.



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As you look back and look ahead, most of your life is yet to unfold. I would suggest playing it safe with health and finance. But take your chances and be bold with education and love. Do the right thing as often as you can and remain connected with those you cherish and love.

Warm regards,

Dino Kazi