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# OPPAM

O N L Y P O S I T I V E

A man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a bright yellow suit jacket, white shirt, and yellow tie, is sitting at a yellow table. His hands are clasped in front of him. To his right, a white coffee cup is partially visible. The background is a solid yellow color.

## The Problem with Success



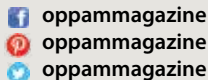
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# Editorial

PROF ANTONY P JOSEPH  
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## Can Destiny Be Changed?

An incident mentioned in the book *Success in 30 Days* goes like this. A soldier was mortally wounded in battle. The doctor declared that he was certain to die. A chaplain was sent to him so that he could pass away peacefully. The chaplain went to the soldier and said, "My son, your wounds are severe. It is likely that you are going to die. Is there anything you would like to say or do before the end?"

The soldier replied, "There is a diary in the inside pocket of my coat. Could you please get it for me, Father?" The chaplain did so. "Please open the diary," the soldier requested again. The chaplain opened it. "There is a ten-rupee note inside." "So what about it?" asked the chaplain. "Let us make a bet, Father. Ten rupees. I am not going to die," the soldier said.

The soldier's confidence astonished the chaplain. Many of us surrender to fate. We say: "This is my destiny," "This is my lot in life," "This will never work out."

There are many people around us who helplessly submit to fate in this manner. They do not fight against fate; they simply surrender before it. Such people invite failure upon themselves. Instead, those who believe, "I will not lose; I will succeed," and who struggle accordingly, achieve success in life.

Diseases such as cancer affect many people. Yet only some of them manage to overcome the illness. Even when two people receive the same treatment, often only one survives cancer. The reason is said to be that they possessed an extraordinary level of resilience and resistance - like the soldier in the story mentioned earlier. Everyone said that he would die. But he said that he would not die. The reason was that he had immense faith in himself.

There is an experiment conducted by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania. They placed a number of dogs in cages and administered electric shocks to them. No matter where they stood, they received shocks. Whether they lay down, sat or moved away, they still received shocks. As the shocks continued, the dogs became accustomed to them. Eventually, it became a habit. Later, the dogs were placed in another cage where there were no shocks. Yet they did nothing to avoid the shocks in the new situation. They had already surrendered to what they believed was their fate.

This is what is called being "conditioned." People who pass continuously through adverse circumstances gradually become resigned to them. Once conditioned, they often do not try to break free from that state. They make peace with a life of extreme helplessness. Such people withdraw into themselves, believing in fate, destiny or luck. This is not the right approach to life.

It is true that in certain situations we become helpless. But helplessness acquired through conditioning does not take us anywhere. It is something that stands strongly against success in life. We must come out of such helplessness. We must fight for ourselves. When everyone around us says that we will fail, we must tell ourselves that we will succeed. When many point fingers and say, "You are a failure," we must believe, "I am meant to succeed." When society collectively says, "You are incapable," we must boldly declare, "I am capable," and strive to prove our ability. No one else makes us successful or unsuccessful. We ourselves do.

Therefore, without surrendering to unnecessary helplessness, without cursing our destiny and moving forward with optimism, self-confidence and above all, a firm reliance on God, let us continue our journey.

Regards

**Prof Antony P Joseph**



# Do We Need a Digital Detox?

**H**ave you ever tried living for a day without your phone? Have you ever felt uneasy after staying away from social media for a few days?

Today, for the majority of people around the world, the day begins by looking at a mobile phone. It also ends the same way. Moreover, much of the day is spent interacting with mobile devices. Work, entertainment and even social interactions are increasingly conducted through phones. It is in this context that the idea of digital detox becomes relevant.

#### **What Is Digital Detox?**

Digital detox refers to consciously distancing oneself from or temporarily abstaining from mobile phones, social media, the internet and other digital devices.

Keeping the phone switched off for an entire day, completely avoiding social media during weekends or observing designated 'no-screen hours' are all examples of digital detox practices.

The goal is to provide the mind with rest, improve concentration and create opportunities for focused thinking.

#### **Why Is It Relevant?**

Let us consider why digital detox is important.

**Digital detox refers to consciously distancing oneself from or temporarily abstaining from, mobile phones, social media, the internet and other digital devices.**



The human brain was not designed for constant information switching. Continuous notifications and endless scrolling disrupt our attention and concentration. Forgetfulness and mental fatigue are often consequences of this constant stimulation.

Digital detox serves as a way of protecting ourselves from these problems.

Excessive screen use at night has also been shown to reduce the production of melatonin, the hormone that helps regulate sleep. This can lower sleep quality, lead to late bedtimes, increase fatigue and cause sluggishness the following morning.

Research has also shown that people who spend excessive amounts of time on social media often experience poorer mental well-being.

One reason is that social media frequently presents the successes, beautiful moments, attractiveness and popularity of other people's lives. Constant exposure to such content can make individuals feel inadequate by comparison. It may create the impression that 'my life is not good enough' or 'my life is being wasted.'

As a result, self-confidence can decline and mental health may suffer. Digital detox is often proposed as one way to counter these effects.

### **Benefits of Digital Detox**

Many people who have practiced digital detox report improvements in concentration and sleep quality.

They also experience greater mental calmness, peace of mind and emotional well-being.

### **Is It Practical?**

An important question is whether digital detox is truly practical.

Today, almost everything has be-

come digital. Work, education, banking, relationships and news are all deeply integrated with digital technology.

In such circumstances, completely avoiding digital life is neither realistic nor feasible. Many people have been unable to succeed in a complete digital detox, and for most, it is not practical.

In fact, after putting their phones aside for a short period, many people return to them with even greater enthusiasm. This highlights just how deeply mobile devices have become embedded in our daily lives.

### **The Way Forward**

For this reason, digital balance may be more desirable than complete digital detox.

At the same time, it is important to cultivate healthy digital habits. Some practical suggestions include:

- Avoid looking at your phone during the first thirty minutes of the day. Instead, use that time for prayer, walking, reading or meditation.
- Turn off unnecessary notifications and reduce social media alerts.
- Designate certain spaces and times—such as the dining area, bedroom and leisure time—as phone-free zones.
- Stop endlessly scrolling through negative news and short-form videos.
- Recognize that real life is more important than reel life.

Technology is something we should appreciate and make use of. However, we should never become slaves to it.

Use technology as a tool to improve life, but do not allow technology to become a force that undermines your well-being and quality of life.



# When Tension Strikes, Pick Up a Pen...

Everyone goes through various kinds of anxieties and mental stress. The intensity of a person's anxiety depends on the particular problems they are facing. Here is a simple way to deal with such situations. The first thing you need to do is take a sheet of paper and a pen. When you are distressed and do not know what to do in the face of anxiety, this is the first step toward adopting a very simple method. After taking the pen and paper start writing. It need not be lengthy essays or profound subjects. Instead, begin by writing questions such as: What am I afraid of right now? Why am I unable to control this anxiety? How serious will this be after one hour or two hours?

If you ask why one should write, the answer is this: when anxieties exist only in our minds, they seem very large to us. They are abstract. But when we write them down on paper, they become tangible. We gain clarity about

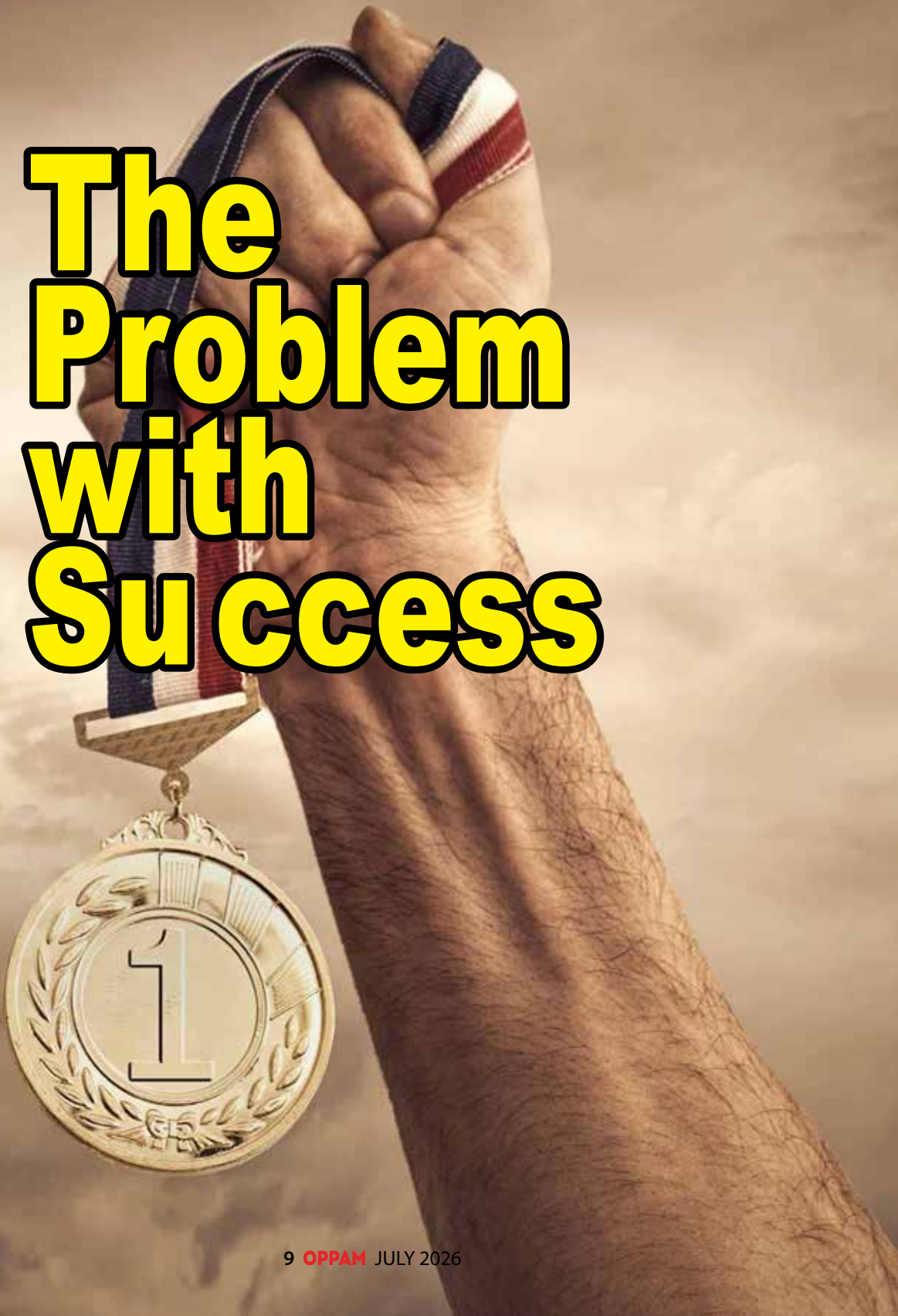
them. Not only that, we also begin to understand how they can be handled. As a result, managing them becomes much easier. We realize that things are not as frightening or as worrying as we had imagined. The turmoil in the mind subsides and the discomfort begins to diminish.

You do not have to spend a great deal of time writing. Three to five minutes is enough. By then, the mind will already begin to calm down. Just as boiling milk settles when the stove is turned off, the anxieties in the mind gradually begin to reduce. This may seem very simple to us. However, it is a method that has proven effective for many people.

The new trend, whenever people become tense about something, is to pick up their mobile phone and start scrolling. That only increases the uneasiness. Instead, when you begin to write, the mind becomes calmer. Therefore, from now on, give this experiment a try.



# The Problem with Success



All of us desire success. The driving force behind our actions and competitions is the desire to succeed. Everyone's effort and hard work are aimed at achieving success. The happiness that success brings is immense, and it is undoubtedly important. No one wants to fail. Failure brings

humiliation and discouragement. Success brings pride and advancement. Yet, despite all this, success has another problem as well.

It can hinder our growth. This is an aspect that most people fail to notice. It is the effort to succeed that makes us hardworking and diligent. It is also what motivates us to acquire knowledge and earn recognition.

However, the majority of people stop striving once they have achieved success. As a result, they lose the possibility of further growth. We sometimes pluck the leaves of certain plants to prevent them from growing taller. In much the same way, when we reach a particular stage and stop moving forward, it is because we cease learning new things and discontinue our hard work.

Growth occurs when we continue learning new things. Success often gives us a sense of security. For that very reason, after a certain point, it can become harmful to us. Some successes silently obstruct a person's growth. Outwardly, we may appear to be successful individuals. But if we look carefully, we may realize that inwardly we have become failures.

Therefore, even when you succeed, keep learning new things. Do not stop making efforts simply because you have achieved success. Until the very moment we fall in death, there remain many things for us to learn anew. By learning new things, we continually renew ourselves. We remain young in spirit. Even after achieving success, only those who continue to work hard can sustain it.

So understand that no success is the end of the journey. Continue to strive and continue to learn throughout life.





# Every Day Feels the Same...

**D**o all your days seem identical? Boredom, lethargy... fatigue from the moment you wake up in the morning, a sense of mental fogginess, a lack of interest in anything... What is the real reason behind this?

According to psychotherapists, the lethargy, exhaustion, fatigue and lack of interest in anything that are experienced from the beginning of the day are symptoms of a psychological and physical condition known as the 'burnout cycle.' This is not a change that happens suddenly one fine morning. Rather, it is a condition that develops gradually as a result of long-term stress,

lack of rest and constant strain. It occurs when inadequate physical rest, sleep deprivation and excessive stress slowly accumulate and exhaust a person from within.

There are some noticeable signs that can help determine whether you are experiencing burnout.

### **Interest in Talking to Others Decreases**

There was a time when talking to friends or family members brought joy. But now, such conversations feel burdensome. Answering phone calls begins to feel like an obligation. Activities that once brought happiness no longer



provide any sense of enjoyment.

You may still be doing your work and talking on the phone, but without any pleasure. There is also little interest in going out or interacting with people.

### **Even Small Decisions Feel Difficult**

Questions such as "What should I eat today?" or "Which task should I do first?" begin to feel overwhelming. This happens because the brain is under excessive stress. As a result, even minor decisions start to feel like major burdens.



## **What Can You Do to Recover from Burnout?**

- Identify the real cause of your exhaustion.
- Create clear boundaries between work and personal life.
- Take sleep and rest seriously.
- Reintroduce small hobbies into your life.
- Talk to people you trust.
- Seek help from a mental health professional if necessary.

## **Staying Up at Night Scrolling on the Phone**

Even when the body is exhausted, you continue scrolling through social media late into the night or keep watching videos. This can be seen as the mind's attempt to regain the sense of control that was lost during the day. This condition is known as "revenge bedtime procrastination."

### **Reduced Empathy Towards Other People's Problems**

Things that you once listened to with care and concern now seem irritating. The suffering of others no longer affects you. The willingness to help that once came naturally seems to have disappeared somewhere along the way. Instead of compassion, impatience and irritability begin to grow. This state may be described as "compassion fatigue."

### **Physical Symptoms of Stress Begin to Appear**

Burnout does not remain confined to the mind. Its symptoms often manifest in the body as well. Headaches, neck pain, sleep disturbances, stomach aches and persistent fatigue are all possible signs of burnout.

### **Fatigue Does Not Go Away Even After Rest**

Even after resting for two days, you still feel exhausted when Monday arrives. If your mind does not regain its energy even after the weekend, it may not be ordinary tiredness. This is one of the major warning signs of burnout.

Many people mistakenly interpret burnout as laziness. In reality, however, it is the mind and body saying, "I need rest now." The important thing is to recognize it at the right time. Otherwise, the rhythm of life itself may be disrupted.

# When Lifestyle Becomes the Villain



Maintaining a regular sleep schedule, following a balanced diet, exercising regularly and reducing screen time are among the key ways to address these problems.



"I am always tired. Even sleep doesn't make it go away."

This is a statement frequently heard from many young people today. Experts say that what lies behind it is often not ordinary tiredness, but a serious state of lifestyle-related burnout.

Experts consistently observe that modern lifestyles are mentally and physically exhausting young people. Constant pressure to remain productive, lack of sleep, unhealthy eating habits and social isolation all combine to create this condition.

What happens in burnout is that the body's and mind's recovery system begins to break down. Even after sleeping through the night, a person wakes up feeling exhausted. This is because the problem does not lie only in the body; it also affects the nervous system, emotional well-being and overall lifestyle.

### **Factors That Push Young People Towards Burnout**

#### **Constant Performance Pressure**

The pressure to study more, work more and earn more contributes significantly to burnout among young people. The younger generation is often living a life without adequate rest.

Fear of losing one's job, examination pressure and professional competition all increase mental stress. As a result, emotional and psychological resilience gradually diminishes.

#### **Irregular Lifestyle**

Using phones and computers late into the night and maintaining irregular sleeping patterns negatively affect the body's natural rhythms.

Going to sleep and waking up at consistent times are equally important for both the body and the brain.

## Digital Life and Isolation

Having more online connections and fewer offline relationships invites loneliness into one's life.

As a result, genuine emotional connections become weaker. The decline in face-to-face conversations reduces emotional support and can make burn-out more severe.

## The Fast-Paced Urban Lifestyle

The constant rush of city life, commuting, traffic and work-related pressures mentally exhaust many young people. We often read reports about the increasing risk of heart disease among young people. This is one of the major factors behind that trend. Moreover, the same circumstances contribute to the growing prevalence of conditions such as fatty liver disease, hormonal imbalances and depression.

Maintaining a regular sleep schedule, following a balanced diet, exercis-

## Warning Signs to Watch For

- Feeling tired all the time
- Reduced concentration
- Mental sluggishness or brain fog
- Even small things becoming unbearable
- Headaches and body aches
- Irritability
- Sleep problems
- Lack of motivation

ing regularly and reducing screen time are among the key ways to address these problems.

Do not ignore the symptoms mentioned above by assuming, "Everyone lives like this." When your body signals that it needs rest, be willing to listen to it.



# Do You Feel Guilty About Resting?

**Among us are people who believe that taking a break amidst life's busyness is somehow wrong. To them, resting feels like wasting time. But rest is essential. Otherwise, do you know what can happen?**



**F**rom the outside, everything may appear calm. But if you look within, it is complete chaos. Even while appearing to lead a normal life, the mind is weighed down by an overwhelming burden. This state is known as 'functional freeze'.

It is different from ordinary laziness or idleness. The simplest way to describe it is this: the body remains active, but the mind becomes inactive.

### **Signs of Functional Freeze**

Even small tasks begin to feel like enormous burdens. Sending an email, cleaning a room, taking a bath, making a phone call- such simple activities can feel extremely difficult. The person knows that something needs to be done, yet cannot get started. There is an

awareness that "I should do this," but the body does not seem to respond.

Have you ever heard people say, "My brain isn't working"? They feel this way because their thoughts seem clouded and their ability to concentrate diminishes. This too is part of functional freeze.

They may no longer experience emotions such as happiness, excitement or sadness clearly. All emotions begin to feel the same. They prefer to keep their distance from other people. Replying to messages or answering phone calls starts to feel burdensome.

### **Why Does This Happen?**

Functional freeze is often a consequence of the burnout and chronic stress discussed earlier.



It develops through a combination of excessive work, constant pressure and a lack of adequate rest. These factors gradually push the nervous system into a kind of shutdown mode.

The human body has a natural survival response system consisting of three primary reactions:

Fight (confronting the threat), Flight (escaping the threat) and Freeze (becoming immobilized)

When faced with danger or overwhelming stress, some people's nervous systems choose the freeze response. This is a natural protective mechanism. However, when it continues for a long period, even everyday life can become difficult to manage.

## How Can You Come Out of It?

The goal is not to fix your entire life all at once. Instead, start with very small actions: Make your bed, take a five-minute walk and drink a glass of water.


Simple activities like these can help move the nervous system back into a safer and more regulated state.

Breathing exercises, stretching and physical exercise can also help reduce stress and support recovery. Some people view rest as something negative. This is a misconception. Learn to see rest without guilt. Rest is neither wasted time nor laziness - it is recovery time.

So allow yourself to rest without feeling guilty.



# What Is the Best Age to Have a Child?



**W**hat is the ideal age to have a baby? Here is the answer to one of the most common questions raised among young couples.

Education, career goals, financial stability, delayed marriages and changing lifestyles are causing many people to postpone parenthood. This is where the relevance of certain age ranges that are biologically and medically more favorable for pregnancy becomes important.

According to experts, a woman's fertility is generally at its peak between the ages of 20 and 30. During this period, the quality of the eggs is usually at its best. The chances of conception are higher, while the risk of miscarriage is lower. In addition, pregnancy and childbirth-related complications tend to be less common.

After the age of 30, fertility gradually begins to decline. This decline becomes more noticeable after the age of 35.

## **What Is the Relationship Between a Woman's Age and Pregnancy?**

Women are born with a fixed number of eggs. As they grow older, both the number and quality of these eggs decrease, while the likelihood of chromosomal abnormalities increases.

This is why conception may take

longer with advancing age and why pregnancy-related complications become more common.

However, this does not mean that pregnancy becomes impossible after the age of 35. Today, many women successfully give birth after the age of 35. Advances in medical technology and fertility treatments have played a significant role in making this possible.

Nevertheless, pregnancies at this age may carry certain risks, including conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

### **The Importance of the Father's Age**

Just as a woman's age is important, a man's age also plays a significant role in having children.

Advancing age can affect the quality of sperm. As men grow older, sperm quality and motility may gradually decline.

Another important point to note is that not only the age of the man and woman but also their lifestyle plays a crucial role in fertility and childbirth.

### **Lifestyle Factors That Matter**

Smoking, alcohol consumption, obesity, lack of sleep and unhealthy eating habits are all important factors that can affect reproductive health.

There are also several factors that contribute to the birth of a healthy child: Maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, managing body weight, living free from substance abuse and undergoing regular medical check-ups.

### **In Summary**

It is difficult to say that there is only one perfect age at which a person should have a child. While there may be a biologically ideal window for pregnancy, the decision to become parents involves much more than biology.

Physical health, emotional readiness, financial stability and personal life circumstances all play an important role in determining the right time for parenthood.



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