SUZANNE

The taste of desire

For Suzanne, my love,
Evita, our daughter and
Aline and Jill, our granddaughters

Author: Eric Willemsens
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PREFACE

I love the feeling of desire and have always wondered what desire tastes like. I could describe what I experience when I taste Beluga caviar or take a sip of the best Dom Perignon champagne but I chose for the poetic form and images that evoke desires in me.

Desire is the Driving Force of Human Existence

Desire is a fundamental and universal human emotion. It is the inner urge for something one does not yet possess, but which one believes will bring happiness, fulfillment, or meaning. Whether it is love, success, freedom, recognition, or simply peace, desire is the engine behind human choices and actions. It is both a source of inspiration and a cause of unrest.

The Philosophy of Desire

In philosophy, desire has often been a topic of discussion. Plato saw desire as an expression of lack; according to him, the soul longs for the divine, the perfect idea that is only imperfectly reflected in the earthly world. In his allegory of the cave, he illustrates how people desire truth and enlightenment, even if they are not always consciously aware of it.

According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, humans have two choices to achieve happiness: they can either accumulate more material possessions or desire less.

According to Buddhists, true and complete happiness can only be attained when one frees oneself from the endless desire for things. Buddhism regards desire as the root of suffering. According to the Four Noble Truths, desire (*tanha*) leads to attachment, and thus to disappointment and pain. Only by letting go of desire can one achieve inner peace and enlightenment.

These seemingly opposing views illustrate the complexity of desire: on the one hand, it propels us forward, but on the other, it can keep us trapped.

The Psychology of Desire

In psychology, desire plays a central role in motivation. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, desire arises from our unmet needs: first for safety and basic necessities, later for love, recognition, and self-actualization. When our lower needs are satisfied, space emerges for higher desires, such as purpose and creativity.

Freud's psychoanalysis also emphasizes the role of unconscious desires. He viewed human desires as often repressed impulses—primarily sexual in nature—that subtly influence our behavior. Carl Jung went further, suggesting that desire is also connected to the collective unconscious: archetypes and symbols shared by all humans that guide desire toward personal growth and individuation.

Desire in Modern Times

In today's society, desire seems to have taken on a commercial dimension. Advertisements, social media, and consumer culture constantly fuel the feeling that we are "missing something." Desire is no longer purely an internal impulse but is externally provoked. We are encouraged to desire a better body, a more expensive house, more followers, or a prestigious career.

Yet even in our time, desire remains an expression of hope. To desire is to believe that change is possible, that something better

exists than the current moment. Desire connects us to our dreams and visions of the future.

Living with Desire

Desire is an ambiguous phenomenon. It can drive us toward growth and creativity, but it can also lead to frustration and disappointment. It is important that we learn to understand, acknowledge, and sometimes even manage our desires—not by suppressing them, but by asking ourselves: Why do I desire this? and What does this say about my deeper needs or values?

In the tension between the present and the future, between what is and what could be, desire lives. And it is precisely in that space where the beauty of being human resides: we are beings who dream, strive, and hope — and in that desire, we find our humanity.

The modern Western human undermines their own happiness by constantly striving for more material wealth and by always wanting more and more. As a result, our stress levels are extremely high, because we continuously raise the bar of our expectations. We can ask ourselves the question: “Who is truly satisfied?” The only possible answer to that question should be: “The one who has few expectations, the one who is happy with what they have and with who they are.”

However, we live in a meritocracy: you get what you deserve. Those who are successful have earned that success. Those who fail are seen as having deserved their failure. This concept finds its roots in Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, which states that everyone has talent and that anyone can achieve

anything. We simply need to give everyone equal opportunities from the beginning. Through hard work and dedication, we can

determine our own success, regardless of race, class, or age. The winners owe their success to themselves.

If you don't possess wealth, money, or an important job, society sees you as a loser—and after a while, you may start seeing yourself that way too. But is that truly the case?

Perhaps this way of thinking is built on a major lie. We are only as good as our last achievement, and our status can change in an instant. Lose your job, lose your money, your possessions, your relationship… I believe it's time to stop thinking in terms of: "If I'm rich and powerful, people will see me as valuable and love me."

In our Western society, the status of most people is built on debt. That means our ability to achieve true success is limited. Our social standing is a house of cards that can collapse at any moment. Globalization has only increased this sense of insecurity. Fear can spread rapidly. Our jobs, our income, and even our pensions have all become uncertain.

The gap between what we need and what corporations or the state are willing to give us is growing. We live in a welfare state which, while beneficial in some respects, also means that when the state gives us money for doing nothing, it simultaneously undermines our sense of self-worth. It makes us lazy, dependent, and insecure.

There are growing voices suggesting that every welfare payment should come with some kind of return effort or contribution. In my view, happiness requires having control over oneself and one's environment.