

Potential Cues of Attachment to a Sunk Cost

Thoughts:

- “But then it will have been a waste”
- “I don’t want to waste...”
- “I’ve already invested so much...”
- “Get my money’s worth”
- “Can’t quit now”
- “Past the point of no return”
- “I’ll lose face if I don’t...” (*reading history books, whenever somebody does something to avoid losing face, some sort of giant catastrophe is about to occur*)
- “But I *have* to...” (*general indicator of non-consequentialism and feeling trapped*)
- "But then I'll have lost"
- "It will all have been for nothing"
- “It would be too embarrassing not to...”

Feelings:

- Wanting to find a reason to continue
 - Mentally searching for more benefits of your current course of action (aka: cognitive dissonance / rationalization)
 - When not continuing feels like not finishing a book
 - When not continuing feels like losing a game of chess
 - When changing paths feels very sad
 - Resentment; feeling trapped or stuck
 - Being eager for something to be over with already
 - Avoidance: it’s painful to think about the situation - like how you feel when you have a term paper due, and you don’t want to think about your term paper, and so you find yourself burrowing more and more of your attention into what is actually quite a boring video game.
 - Tunnel vision - about one-third of our subjects report that when they’re dealing with things that they don’t want to think about, they literally stare straight ahead and don’t look to either side
 - Backache or muscle tension (apparently George Soros used this to good advantage in figuring out which trading positions to abandon)
 - Feeling a visceral reaction after considering an alternative to your current action.
 - Noticing that you don’t want to stop, because stopping would feel silly
- When you don’t want to do something, but you try hard to want to, or to convince yourself you want to

Add your own examples: