

Will we see more catatonia in the future?

Dr. Northoff:

It's a very interesting thought. And I wouldn't wonder, of course. I cannot say that, but definitely, I would say that these — so in my terms — high frequency bombardment, you don't have these little moments. Even in the subway, you sit in the subway, everybody is doing this. You don't have these little moments of mind wandering. Your mind wants to try out — it wants to go in this direction.

Let me compare that to a little child. So you have a little child. It starts to learn walking. So it goes into this corner. It goes into that corner. So, "Oh, I want to touch the screen. I want to do the — oh, there's somebody coming in the door." So I go there.

So that's basically the way you have to imagine your mind. It constantly tries out this and that. And for that you need a certain freedom. You need a certain internal space so that you're not completely always bombarded by external stimuli. Because, of course, then you follow the external stimuli, but your inner life, you don't really develop an inner mental life anymore. You're completely dependent upon external stuff.

I've heard it in many countries. I travel quite a lot all over the world because of our collaboration and students and I hear it everywhere in the country that among the young people, anxiety and depression increase. It's shocking. Whether you're in Japan, in India, in China, and recently I was in Spain and Italy and Germany — here in Canada, probably in the USA too. You hear it everywhere and I assume that is related to that. And that I could imagine leads also to higher incidents of catatonia, particularly in those who are very vulnerable.