

Upgraditis is something we will all suffer from from time to time. We may not think so, but it will happen in some form or another. The important thing is to recognise it, treat it and have proper management after treatment to minimise recurrence.

What is it

A burning need to spend money on a perceived better piece of coffee kit, be it grinder, machine, roaster etc...and usually accompanied by feelings of emptiness and dissatisfaction until this is achieved

Symptoms

It is usually manifested by feelings of either dissatisfaction or disappointment with ones current equipment, occasionally envy over the new equipment of someone else. You start looking at new equipment, reading about the perceived benefits of one widget over another. Even the ravings of members encouraging you to upgrade look sensible, nay even desirable. You have a marked inability to calculate the value of money and your credit card can be removed from your wallet as if it was sprayed with WD40 or made of Teflon. 😊

Treatment

If treatment is delayed the results can be serious, often your brain ends up shoved right up your AR%\$, where of course it ceases to work....and before you know it you have a £10,000 versalab GS3 weighing 140lbs waiting to be plumbed into the mains and without a hope of fitting on a totally inadequate kitchen work surface. 😊 Of course if you were married with kids, you wont be much longer, but then more money to spend on the machine.

Also sufferers sometimes subconsciously damage their existing machine...they don't realise they are doing it...but the "well it's broken so I need another (better) one", often seems a plausible excuse for the wife, or even oneself. 😊

The usual (and widely accepted) treatment is to wave your credit card around until someone grabs it and exchanges it for a new bit of kit...this is the easy route and will often only result in a temporary solution. It is also the most expensive form of treatment. But I am going to suggest a few alternative therapies. 😊

1. **Visualisation Therapy**- Imagine you have the best espresso machine there is...your just using one of its 8 groups 😊, grind the coffee in your imaginary Malkohenig (unless you really have one). Does that espresso taste good....does it taste great! Yes 😊, then think about all that money you just saved 😊

2. **Getting a second hand bargain** - Oh yes, oft tried and can be a very succesfull form of therapy. But beware, these treatment regimes are untried and there can be serious side effects. These include (but are not limited to; swearing, cursing, cut fingers, water on the floor, long waits for parts no longer made, head holding (because a part is so expensive, or doesn't fit). When the treatment is sucessful, the results can be astounding...that feeling of smugness to know that you have achieved your dream at a fraction of the normal price, the envy of your friends etc.. When it doesn't work, because you have a rusty, moth eaten pile of crap sitting in your kitchen that you don't want to drink out of and doesn't work anyway....you are at your low point. With your resistance this low, your only option is to get rid of it on e-bay (remember theres 1000s of people looking for this alternative therapy, perhaps you can help one of them 😊).

3. **I call this the Ostrich** - You don't look at any other machines, you don't read anything about new devices, you keep telling yourself your machines are the best thing since sliced bread and your coffee tastes great. This form of therapy is not only free but highly effective. There is only one negative side effect to this particular treatment regime. You turn up at someones house, having used Ostrich therapy for the last 10 years (or longer). They of course have the latest and greatest prosumer espresso machine with terrific grinder. you suddenly realise that the stuff you have been drinking from your steam powered espresso machine and blade grinder tastes like s\$t and has done for many years, the feeling of dissatisfaction that you have been drinking crap for so long and unnecessarily is overwhelming and a serious relapse of *upgraditis* can occur with expensive results. I would recommend to anyone using Ostrich therapy, that you need to have an eye up your a%se just to keep abreast of what going on.

4. **Denial** - these simple acts of denial, lying wanting to upgrade or refusing to discuss it, are clues that the person himself deep down inside knows that he has a problem. If it's not a problem, why lie about it. 😊

Defenses are the specific way we ward off attacks on our denial. Some defenses are conscious and we are aware of them. Others are subconscious. We use both to keep our denial intact. Some common defenses are listed below

Minimizing: is admitting the problem to some degree but in such a way that it appears to be much less serious or significant than it actually is. "I am very happy with my current set-up" "Sure, it would be NICE to upgrade, but its not really necessary".

Rationalizing: is making excuses or giving reasons to justify your unwillingness to upgrade. "I have not really got the money at the moment", "I have found a way to make much better coffee with my existing setup; are some of the examples of rationalizing. The behavior is not denied but an inaccurate explanation of its cause is given.

INTELLECTUALIZING or GENERALIZING: is avoiding emotional, personal awareness of an *upgraditis* problem by using theories about the needs, benefits and risks of upgrading, keeping it general and vague. "Are those machines really reliable? Just the other day I was reading about problems with them." "Lots of people have these great machines, is their coffee that much better than mine" These are some examples

of intellectualizing.

Aftercare

These are the recommended procedures to (a) ensure short term happiness and prevent long term recurrence. Whatever treatment regime you opted for (but especially important if you spent money, the larger the amount the more important this is), is to continue to espouse the benefits of what you have done, not only to yourself, but to your significant other. Be warned this will often involve a significant and some would say disproportionate amount of effort in making milk based drinks for your spouse etc.. (especially cappuccinos). It's especially important to keep telling yourself, this is it, this is the pinnacle, this is the last machine I will ever need or want....oh yeah and try to believe it 😊

Keep your new purchase clean, nay spotless...the moment you allow it to get dirty, not only do you risk the pointed jibes of your other half about how much you spent and how you have "lost interest", you also risk the dreaded [upgraditis](#) cos your machine is looking a bit tired.

Lastly, stay away from certain members on this forum, don't go to meets, shows or coffee related exhibitions and certainly don't read anything I post 😊😬