

The Psychological Benefits of Commuting to Work

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Back when commuting was a requirement for going to work, I once passed through a subway tunnel so filthy and crowded that the poem inscribed on its ceiling seemed like a cruel joke. “overslept, / so tired. / if late, / get fired. / why bother? / why the pain? / just go home / do it again.” “The Commuter’s Lament,” which adorns a subterranean passage in New York City’s 42nd Street station, made the already grim ritual of getting to and from work positively Dante-esque. But no one questioned the gist of it. The commute, according to the Nobel Prize–winning economist Daniel Kahneman’s research, ranked as the single most miserable part of our day. A Swiss study held long commutes responsible for “systematically lower subjective well-being.”

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