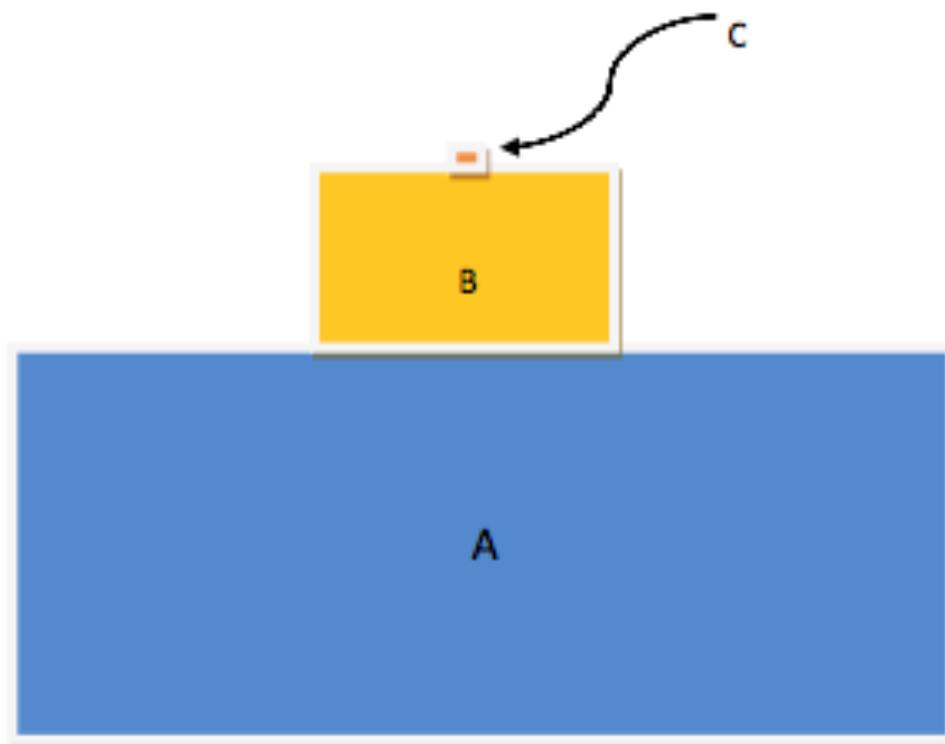


The Three Stages of Man (why Radical Life Extension cannot be achieved by everybody) - h+ Media

authors Marios Kyriazis

This essay is a personal view, distilled from over 30 years of studying aging and life extension at the scientific and clinical levels. It contains a degree of informed speculation, and it is based on research where indicated.

The real obstacle thwarting the progress of modern human evolution is not the divide between the rich and the poor. It is the divide between the enlightened and the unenlightened. This divide is also a crucial impediment in achieving Radical Life Extension (the elimination of age-related degeneration). In addition to these two extremes, there is an intermediate stage which facilitates the flow of information between these two sections of humanity. Here, I describe these three stages where humans (in a socio-cultural but **not** economic sense) tend to gravitate towards. Considering the analogy of the 'life pyramid' where the lower but very numerous microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, plankton etc.) form the basis of a hypothetical pyramid, with intermediate organisms such as animals and plants in the middle, and the humans at the very top, I will expand and will describe another scenario, a pyramid within a pyramid, where humans themselves are also divided into [three broad categories](#).



Group A: Population approximately 6 billion. The 'Human Plankton', the conventional, the cognitively 'unenlightened', those who have poor imagination and no motivation to achieve a nobler or a greater aim. Their worldview lacks sophistication and vision. They are those who live their everyday life (irrespectively of being rich or poor), being contented with what they have, happy to have a family, look forward to their retirement and die when their time comes. These are the [r-strategists](#) with shorter

lifespans and high rates of reproduction (more than 2 children per couple). These people are essential in channelling energy towards higher levels, and some of their progeny may be able to move to group B. They are likely to benefit from traditional⁽¹⁾ health advice.

As these people contribute mostly passively to the [evolutionary process](#) (and do not play any part in purposefully guiding evolution), they continue to be subjected to the slow process of [natural selection](#), and remain constrained by the predictions of the [disposable soma theory](#), being disposable/expendable, with more emphasis on the physical rather than the cognitive.

Group B: Population approximately 1 billion. The 'Motivated Intermediates', those who realize that there is more to life than just living and then dying. The 'semi-unconventional', with a fair degree of (perhaps misplaced) sophistication and inapt creativity, they believe that humans must achieve something nobler than mere survival. They are not quietly fulfilled with everyday life and think that they should strive for something higher. They feed energy to the higher level, and some of their progeny may be able to move to group C. They experience longer lifespans, are able, in principle, to reach [super-centenarian](#) status and have lower numbers of offspring (2 or fewer children per couple). They can benefit from semi-unconventional⁽²⁾ health advice. The inherent value of this group is that it prepares increasingly more members of humanity for entry into group C. Group B is a stage where people are primed, in a [Dantesque Purgatorial](#) sense, for a philosophically superior, greater and nobler stage.

Group C: Population approximately 50-100 million. Not necessarily the richest financially, but those with high levels of intellectual sophistication, persistent motivation, imagination, vision and creativity. The 'Enlightened', the illuminated, the [K strategists](#) with long (most likely to eventually experience indefinite) lifespans and [low or absent reproduction](#) (nil children per couple-no couples but mixed sexuality). They are more prone to follow unconventional health advice⁽³⁾. They are [meaningfully](#) hyper-connected, and fully compliant with the [Law of Requisite Usefulness](#)⁽⁴⁾. They believe that humans are not here just to experience as much personal pleasure as possible before they die, but have developed the ability (even, the duty) to constructively change their environment, and are taking active steps in order to make a difference in the world. They are the intentional evolutionaries⁽⁵⁾. These people are much less expendable, and more prone to be subjected to the [Indispensable Soma Hypothesis](#) being very costly to replace and less so to repair in the biological sense (so they are more likely to be [retained by Nature](#)).

It is true that some people may temporarily transit from one group to another, but they eventually return back to their original group. In order to progress to a higher stage one must deploy persistence and 'out of the box' thinking.

The implications of this divide is that one cannot achieve something extraordinary such as Radical Life Extension by using ordinary means, or by adhering to a conventional paradigm. Worse still, one cannot simply modify or readjust this existing paradigm expecting that this modification is enough to lead to something extraordinary. Concepts such as SENS-inspired rejuvenation biotechnologies, Google Calico approaches, [Paleo lifestyle](#) methodologies, specialised nutrition and exercise etc. are mere modifications to the existing conventional paradigm, suitable only for the intermediate, preparatory stage. Real difference will follow when we espouse a more radical philosophy and an unconventional worldview if we are to achieve the unconventional.

An example of an unconventional worldview

It is clear that humans are increasingly being [integrated with technology](#) and this symbiosis is bound to change our biological systems. It is also clear, as a general concept that we may need to redefine the priorities of our lifestyle. What is now considered as a 'healthy' lifestyle may not be appropriate for the new type of humanity that is emerging, and it may now become advisable to shift the emphasis from the physical to the cognitive. The current advice is to live a 'natural' lifestyle, eat natural food, and exercise regularly. But this kind of lifestyle was appropriate for humans who depended on hunting, gathering, working the land, finding their way in the forest and having to be physically strong in order to cope with the rigors of life. However, our environment is now different from that of our ancestors. Now some

sections of humanity are becoming very dependent on technology. Our cognitive processes need instant energy from sugars. It is no longer evolutionarily relevant to be able to run marathons or exercise at the gym when, instead, we can contribute better to humanity by sharing actionable and meaningful information which may enlighten others. The information burden carried by modern technology (Ambient Intelligence, the Global Brain, The Internet of Things) is having [unprecedented impact on our biology](#), which is at odds with commonly held beliefs about what is natural.

One may argue that our biological heritage still depends on previously defined parameters and that it would be difficult to change this dependency. However, this is not valid as a concept. Fast epigenetic changes and other biological mechanisms based on [degeneracy, exaptation and resilience](#) are perfectly able to compensate for this new techno-cultural lifestyle. This is not to suggest that the need to exercise is totally eliminated but it may be more appropriate within a technological modern environment to make more effort to maintain cognition and intelligence (successful problem-solving), rather than aim to become physically stronger. Within a [hormetic framework](#) this is also a matter of balance: recreational exercise and relaxation have inherent values. On the other hand, extreme or prolonged cognitive effort may result in information fatigue and overshoot the organism's adapting capabilities. Therefore, a balanced ideal should be found between excessive physical exercise (which generates pro-aging free radicals in any case) and excessive mental challenges.

As hinted above, another crucial mind-set that needs to change is the one which relies on rejuvenation biotechnologies as a way for achieving Radical Life Extension (such as SENS or Calico inspired approaches). It would be a great leap of faith for someone to realize that, radically extending the human lifespan will not, in fact, be achieved by using [a physical intervention](#). It would only be achieved through cultivating the transition from lower groups to group C as described above.

There is no denying the fact that Radical Life Extension is an unconventional concept. In order to achieve it, one should cease following conventional methods and, instead, consider this maxim: only an unconventional worldview will lead to the achievement of an unconventional aim.

Notes

1. Traditional health advice: Sustained physical exercise, generally healthy diet and lifestyle, simple dietary supplements
2. Semi-unconventional health advice: Paleo and power law lifestyle, 'Primal Blueprint' and 'Movenat' principles
3. Unconventional health advice: No need to maintain full physical fitness, eat according to cognitive needs, and expand cognitive instead of physical qualities.
4. The Law of Requisite Usefulness states that the length of retention of an agent (human) within a network is proportional to that agent's contribution to the overall adaptability of the network.
5. Intentional evolution: the deliberate and intelligent manipulation of our evolutionary process.