

Anxiety, Dread and Overwhelm

Stand out excerpts from -
Chapter 1 of Atlas of the Heart by Brene Brown:

- Our emotional reaction is more tied to our cognitive assessment of the situation than to how our body is reacting.
- Our emotions respond to our thinking assessments. “This demand is beyond my ability to cope.” “I can’t handle it.” Our thoughts impact our physiological response to stimuli.
- It may not always be our physiological response to stimuli, but our thoughts about a situation instead that causes anxiety. *Not inclusive of traumatic responses
- We do not process information ‘correctly’/fully when we are overwhelmed. Overwhelm takes up a lot of cognitive load.
- Those more uncomfortable with uncertainty are more likely to have anxiety.
- Suppressing ‘worry’ thoughts can exacerbate anxiety, and we do have control to interrupt this thought pattern.
- We experience social and physical pain in the same areas of the brain.
- Fear has helped our species to survive. It is a useful emotion.

“You are afraid of surrender, because you don’t want to lose control. But you never had control. All you had was anxiety.”

-Elizabeth Gilbert

I’m sure you have felt it. The sense of being rushed to complete your tasks, as well as grow as a person. The anticipation, fear, uncertainty and uncomfortability of the process.

We can place expectations on ourselves to achieve *now*. Or, we will run out of that precious time to feel fulfilled in life. To make a difference. To change fast enough.

Ambition drives us. Anxiety makes the road bumpy and unpleasant. You may have even said to yourself, “I need this anxiety and self-criticism to push me!” But, then find yourself stuck and burn out a few weeks later.

Anxiety, dread and overwhelm are tools our species developed to ask for help, take a break or escape a situation. Our relationship to these emotions can impact how we harness them.

-Rediscover You Counseling, LLC

**Education provided is not a supplement for treatment.
Please consult with a professional.*

Reflection:

1. Do you pull back to rest when you feel overwhelmed in a moment? What would an effective way of doing this look like? Can you ask for help?
2. Where do you feel that life is responding faster than your nervous system or psyche can keep up with?
3. What is your relationship with uncertainty like? What are the fears present? What are you holding on to?
4. How has avoidance of discomfort served you?
5. Practice re-labeling emotions. Ex: perhaps it is excitement.